FREE

Kent on Sunday

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East edition No 767

POLITICS

Mackinlay faces court hearing

Tory charged over 2015 election expenses

HISTORY

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After all the talk, now it's time for us all to decide

AFTER a string of such seismic shocks in election results - think Trump, think Brexit - it is perhaps a little foolhardy to double-guess the results of the general election.

But let's not kid ourselves - should there be any colour other than blue on Kent's road to Westminster by the end of the week it will be a shock on par with anything that has gone so far.

Labour has enjoyed something of a late rally, primarily courtesy of Jeremy Corbyn not flouncing off when he sees a TV camera and instead realising that actually the media are the traditional conduit between public personality and the great unwashed whose votes he wants.

It's almost certainly not going to be enough, but it has at least swollen the hopes of the left and made those on the right just ponder for a moment whether it would be worth waiting until Friday before renewing their London season ticket.

The Lib Dems resemble a man lost at sea - lots can see him, but we're not sure if he's waving or drowning.

Ukip, on the other hand, has plunged like a stone weighed down with a cartoon-style anvil in that same ocean.

The Greens will surely develop a little momentum, given a certain element of disillusionment with the traditional big parties, but simply getting their deposits back will surely be the sign of a successful campaign for them.

And then, of course, there's the Tories. Fresh from a landslide victory in the county elections, surely nothing can stop their mighty progress?

Of course the best thing about an election is that until we all go and vote, anything could happen. So let's see how it all turns out - we'll be back here next week with all the results to see what you decided.

Editor **Chris Britcher**

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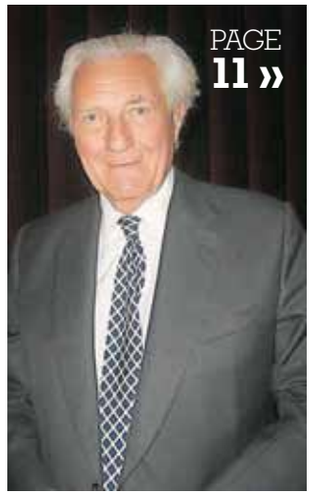

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Mackinlay charged by CPS days before election

By Gavin Cordon
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

CHARGED: Conservative candidate for South Thanet Craig Mackinlay protests his innocence

CRAIG Mackinlay has slammed a decision by prosecutors to charge him over an election expenses row just days before voters head to the polls as "shocking".

The Crown Prosecution Service said that it had charged the Conservative candidate for South Thanet with offences under the Representation of the People Act 1983 following an investigation into spending at the 2015 general election, where he beat then-Ukip leader Nigel Farage.

In a statement, however, Mr Mackinlay, who will still stand for the Tories on Thursday despite the charge, remained sure he would be cleared of any wrongdoing.

"Our justice system is underpinned by the presumption of innocence and I am confident that I will be acquitted as I have done nothing wrong and acted honestly and properly whilst a candidate in 2015, and as all candidates do, acted upon advice throughout," he said.

"Clearly this is a shocking decision by the CPS, given that I've done nothing wrong and I am confident that this will be made very clear as the matter progresses.

"I am very disappointed with the way this has been handled by the CPS and Kent Police, and I must question the timing of this decision given that Kent Police confirmed on April 18 that their file had been sent to the CPS to review and make their decision.

"Why leave this until a few days before the election?"

He has also received the backing of prime minister, Theresa May, who said: "The Conservative party continues to believe that these allegations are unfounded. Craig Mackinlay is innocent until proven guilty and he remains our candidate."

Mr Farage however, who is not contesting South Thanet this time around, welcomed the CPS announcement and predicted a "straight fight" between Ukip and Labour for the seat.

"Once again it is bad judgment from Theresa May. Why on earth would you allow someone to go ahead as general election candidate when this cloud was clearly hanging over him? There will be questions," he said.

Mr Mackinlay, 50, Marion Little, 62, and Nathan Gray, 28, have each been charged and are due to appear at Westminster Magistrates' Court on July 4.

Farage laughs off claim he's 'person of interest' in FBI's Russia probe

NIGEL Farage has distanced himself from reports that he is a "person of interest" in the FBI's investigation into possible collusion between the Kremlin and Donald Trump's presidential campaign.

The former Ukip leader and south east MEP described a report from the Guardian as "hysterical" and claimed it is "extremely doubtful" he could be a person of interest as he has "no connections" to Russia.

In a statement, Mr Farage, who until recently lived in Westerham, also claimed he met WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange "with a view to conducting an interview".

He said: "In response to the Guardian article, it has taken me a long time to finish reading because I am laughing so much.

"This hysterical attempt to associate me with the Putin regime is a result of the liberal elite being unable to accept Brexit and the election of President Trump.

"For the record I have never been to Russia, I've had no business dealings with Russia in my previous life and I have appeared approximately three times on RT (Russia Today) in the last 18 months.

"I consider it extremely doubtful that I could be a person of interest to the FBI as I have no connections to Russia. My meeting with Julian Assange was organised for me by LBC Radio with a view to conducting an interview."

Mr Farage's office said he would be making no further comment on the matter.

The Guardian cited sources with knowledge of the US counter-intelligence investigation as saying Mr Farage had come to the attention of FBI investigators because of his links with individuals in Mr Trump's presidential campaign and Mr Assange.

It added that Mr Farage has not been accused of wrongdoing and is not a suspect or target of the investigation.

Lifeguards return to county beaches in time for summer

LIFEGUARDS have returned to the beaches of north Kent for the summer season.

In red and yellow uniforms, they began patrols at 12 of the county's most popular beaches last weekend, including Botany Bay, Joss Bay, Broadstairs (Viking Bay) and Margate (main sands), which will have a full-time service, every day until September 3.

Ramsgate (main sands), Stone Bay, Westbrook, St Mildreds, West Bay and Minnis Bay beaches in Thanet, and Sheerness and Leysdown beaches in Swale, will have lifeguards in place at weekends and bank holidays until July 7, before an everyday service comes into effect until September 3. Minster beach will receive cover for the peak season only.

Thug jailed after stabbing ex in 'horrific' public attack

A THUG who left his ex-girlfriend with more than 30 stab wounds in a frenzied attack in front of horrified members of the public has been jailed for 16 years.

James McDonald, 30, of no fixed address, attacked his victim as she lay asleep in her bed in Broadstairs, flying into rage after failing to accept their relationship was over.

He repeatedly stabbed her with a kitchen knife as she begged him to stop and hit her across the head with a stereo speaker. She then crawled out onto the street where McDonald grabbed her by the hair and continued to stab her in front of onlookers.

When challenged by a passer-by McDonald left his victim in the street, ran back into the house and set the building alight.

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Swale village stars as Wonder Woman released

A HOLLYWOOD blockbuster partly filmed in Kent hit cinemas across the county this week.

Wonder Woman is a DC superhero movie which follows the transformation of Amazonian Princess, Diana, played by Gal Gadot, into the feminist icon, after an American pilot crashes on the island and tells her about the ongoing world war.

Also featuring Star Trek's Chris Pine and Robin Wright of House of Cards fame, Wonder Woman is one of the most hotly-anticipated films of the year.

The major production visited the small Swale village of Lower Halstow, on the banks of the Medway Estuary, to film a scene set during the First World War of a boat arriving at the docks.

Prince Michael unveils bust of Battle of Britain visionary Lord Dowding

By Tom Pyman
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TRIBUTES have been paid to one of the country's most visionary leaders during the Battle of Britain, who was commemorated this week with a statue in Capel-le-Ferne.

The bust of Lord Dowding, the man who, as air chief marshal Sir Hugh Dowding, led RAF Fighter Command throughout the battle in 1940, was commissioned by the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust and was unveiled on Wednesday at the home of the National Memorial to the Few by Prince Michael of Kent.

Lord Dowding spent the latter years of his life in the west of the county, and his stepson, David Whiting, told KoS of his memories of the man hailed by many as responsible for stopping an invasion of Britain in the Second World War.

"I am probably the only person still alive who knew Hugh Dowding well, from the time he used to visit my mother from 1946 at our home near Tunbridge Wells until his death in 1970," he said.

HONOUR: Dowding's statue

"As a child, he treated me as his own son, taking an interest in my electric trains and telling me about flying during the First World War."

Lord Dowding, a keen skier who wanted to be an engineer, was responsible for our air defence system and, according to Mr Whiting, who now lives in the Algarve in Portugal, had a huge influence on the prime minister.

Speaking about the bust, he said: "It's taken from a photo he didn't like. It's Dowding under stress, with the responsibility of stopping the politicians from losing the war.

"Churchill was a great orator and a great man, and brought people together with his speeches which raised morale when we didn't have a chance of defending ourselves against the might of the German military machine.

"But we had to protect the mainland because if we lost a pilot they'd drown because we didn't have a very good air-sea rescue service.

"Dowding knew Churchill's psychology, he drew a graph of our losses against time and so Churchill said the fighters stay. He had this foresight and ability to understand the technical advancements of the day."

DUO: John and Maggie

BBC breakfast host Maggie set to depart

BBC Radio Kent's popular breakfast show host Maggie Doyle is set to leave the station next week.

A regular alongside John Warnett since 2014, she is departing on June 9, following the general election, to move back to Ireland.

Miss Doyle grew up in Wexford before doing a psychology degree in Cardiff after working on the ferries one summer.

She then studied for a postgraduate diploma in broadcast journalism in London and went on to read the traffic news, before moving to Absolute Radio and then the BBC.

In a statement on Twitter, she said: "I've been in the UK for many years studying, working and having lots of fun. I've made friends for life, and although I will be sad to say goodbye it's only a stone's throw across the Irish Sea. I am excited to start a new chapter in my life and even more excited to be closer to my loved ones in Ireland. As we say at home 'I'm happy out'."

In an interview with KoS last year she said of her on-air chemistry with Mr Warnett: "You can't buy it or go on a course for it. It's about bringing personality to it as well as the hard-hitting journalism and I think we've got a good balance."

Heath on fire again as arson fears grow

CREWS this week responded to another report of a large fire at Dartford Heath.

They arrived on the scene within minutes after receiving several calls on Thursday and quickly extinguished the blaze.

It comes less than a month after chiefs asked residents to help stamp out arsonists who keep ''deliberately'' setting fire to the heathland.

Dartford watch manager from Kent Fire and Rescue, Vince Lewis, said: ''Help us do our job which is to protect the community. If you see anyone starting fires on purpose, please call 999 immediately.

''Setting fires to grass, bushes and rubbish is dangerous. These types of fires can quickly take hold and develop into larger fires putting the environment, property and lives at risk.

''Anyone with information on suspected arsonists is urged to either contact the police on 101 or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.''

Vintage Conservative MP for sale on eBay

VETERAN Conservative Sir Roger Gale was listed for sale on an auction site for 99p.

The joke listing, seemingly posted by Green Party supporters, was removed on Friday, and described the Tory candidate for Thanet North as ''vintage'', who comes with a 76p postage cost.

''The 'Sir Roger' has served us well, but we fear it is just beginning to show signs of wear and tear, so we are selling it as spares or repair,'' it said.

''We are planning to replace it with a 1982 model, the 'Ed Targett' in British Racing Green.''

Mr Targett is the Green party candidate who will come up against Sir Roger in the general election on Thursday.

Responding to the listing, which was only available for collection only, ''preferably with a large net'', Sir Roger told KoS: ''I'm delighted there is a Green supporter with a sense of humour.

''If there is a buyer it will cost them a lot, I am a classic and very high maintenance - any bid made is nowhere near high enough.''

MoD officers stood down across county

PATROLS by Ministry of Defence police officers in Kent have been stood down.

The threat level - raised in the wake of the Manchester terror attack last week - has since been reduced to 'severe' and while MoD officers will no longer be appearing in the county, police chiefs insist we can still expect to see a highly visible presence.

Armed officers will continue to patrol key locations, after they were first installed at sites such as Bluewater, Canterbury Cathedral, Ashford Designer Outlet and the Port of Dover last year.

There were also firearms officers visible at the re-opening of Dreamland in Margate last week, with many reported sightings on streets across the county.

A police spokesperson said: ''While there continues to be no specific intelligence to suggest the communities of Kent are at risk, the public needs to remain alert, but not be alarmed.

''Anyone who witnesses anything suspicious should report it to the Anti-Terrorist Hotline 0800 780321.''

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Frontbencher blasts plan for children's centres a 'scandal'

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

THE shadow education secretary has joined the chorus of criticism over a Conservative-controlled council's plans to close 19 children's centres, blasting the proposals as "an absolute scandal".

Parents were again protesting as Medway Council's Children and Young People Overview and Scrutinty Committee met on Tuesday night, after the opposition Labour group 'called in' the proposals, approved by the cabinet earlier this year.

Under growing financial pressures, the town hall proposes closing the centres and creating four 'super hubs' in its place.

The committee this week agreed that the plans will now go to public consultation.

However, shadow education secretary Angela Rayner slammed the decision, saying: "It's deeply depressing to hear that the Tories have rowed back on their promise to keep the 19 Sure Start centres open in Medway. This is proof that the Tories can't be counted on to do what's right for families. The Tories are taking us backwards. It's an absolute scandal that parents and children are paying the price."

Labour councillors also announced they are set to boycott events to commemorate 350 years since the Battle of Medway next week, in protest against the closures.

ANGER: Angela Rayner has slammed the Conservative-controlled Medway Council

"Our area's military and cultural heritage is important. It tells us where we have come from and shapes who we are. But it is not more important than the present or future," they said.

Conservative councillor Andrew Mackness said: "I'd urge everyone who has a view on this to submit their comments. We want to hear from Medway residents, families, schools, staff and health providers to work out how best we can move forward to meet the needs of Medway's families and children.

"The services must transform if we are to continue to deliver excellent, supportive and safe early years services to families and we need to think of innovative ways to do that. We cannot stand still and watch our services in their current model suffer in the face of a reducing budget and changes in how we must allocate central government funding."

200,000 use port over bank holiday

THE busy bank holiday weekend saw well over 200,000 passengers travel through the Port of Dover.

Continued heightened security checks were undertaken and additional staff were drafted in to provide support to customers whilst they waited to board their ferries.

Traffic flows were also continuously monitored to pre-empt any potential extended delays.

Lightning sparks countywide chaos

THUNDER and lightning storms caused chaos at the start of the week as fire crews rushed across the county to tackle a number of blazes.

Firefighters attended scenes in Chapel Lane, Staplehurst, and Middle Mead in Folkestone after the lighting sparked burning in a number of homes.

Garden city growing

THE continued development of Ebbsfleet Garden City saw nearly 40 new homes hit the market last week.

''This part of Kent is set to become a magnet for local homebuyers and businesses over the next 15 years and the village of Castle Hill will be a major asset to this,'' said Natalie Perry, sales and marketing head at developers Barratt Kent.

Police fear more victims of 'predatory' paedo priest

DETECTIVES fear a former Catholic priest convicted of sexual offences last week could have more victims.

Eugene Fitzpatrick, 68, of Raymond Avenue in Canterbury was convicted of seven counts of indecent assault, four counts of indecency with a child and two counts of buggery at Blackfriars Crown Court last Thursday.

All of the offences took place in the 1960s, 70s, 80s and 90s.

Each of the buggery offences were committed at Our Lady St Joseph's Catholic Church in Hackney against one victim, while all other offences were committed against another victim in Islington.

"Fitzpatrick is a predatory sex offender who abused his position of trust, preying on vulnerable youngsters and subjecting them to horrific sexual abuse over a period of years," said investigating officers DC Lorraine Simpson and DC Klementina Balint.

"In addition to the two known victims in this case, we believe there may be additional survivors of Fitzpatrick's actions who continue to suffer in silence. I urge anyone who has been abused by Eugene Fitzpatrick to contact police without delay."

Drunk Brits disrupt train from France to Ebbsfleet

HUNDREDS of Eurostar passengers looking to make their way back to Kent from the French capital this week were delayed by almost six hours after two drunk British passengers were taken off the train.

The Paris to London train, which departed at 8.15pm on Monday, was held up until the early hours of Tuesday morning as the disruptive travellers were removed by French authorities in Calais, the operator said.

The delay was said to have been caused by border force checks after the incident.

A spokeswoman for Eurostar said: "There were two passengers that became quite disorderly on board the train. We stopped the train in Calais so that the authorities could then manage those two passengers and take them off the train. But then Border Force requested that, because the train had stopped, all the passengers disembark and go through passport control again - which is why it was delayed."

The train eventually rolled into Ebbsfleet International just before 4am, then terminated at St Pancras International in the capital just after 4.15am.

A spokesman for the Prefecture du Pas-de-Calais said: "The two individuals were very drunk but they have not been put in custody."

Eurostar last week announced a direct service to Amsterdam would be live by the end of the year, but could not confirm if Ebbsfleet and Ashford would feature en route.

Level crossing closures

TWO level crossings – at St Dunstan's Street and at St Stephen's Road in Canterbury will both be closed today (Sunday)

KCC has given permission to Network Rail to close the crossings to carry out the work, which chiefs say is needed to complete its Journey Time Improvement scheme.

Hate crime on beach

TWO teenagers have been arrested after a Jewish family was reportedly attacked in a hate crime at Minster beach on Sunday.

The 18-year-old and 16-year-old have now been released after being arrested on Tuesday on suspicion of committing a racially aggravated public order offence.

Fancy dress parade

A FANCY dress procession is being led through Gravesend town centre today (Sunday) to mark the re-opening of Bustles & Breeches.

There will also be performances from a vocal group, baby ballet, Irish dance school and an acoustic singing trio.

Bluewater evacuated

Bluewater shopping centre had to be dramatically evacuated on Friday after a fire in one of its restaurants.

Crews were called to a small oven fire at Square Pie, which resulted in the Winter Gardens temporarily being evacuated but the blaze was dealt with quickly.

Evans turns back on Ukip

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

UKIP has lost another member on Thanet District Council after Peter Evans defected to join the Conservatives - though he was warned "all is not what it seems in Tory heaven".

Cllr Evans, Ukip's former planning chairman and member of the Salmestone ward, said he was quitting the party after "election pledges before the 2015 election have been largely unfulfilled".

Ukip took control of its only local council in 2015, swept to victory on promises of re-opening Manston Airport which, for now at least, has not been delivered.

Cllr Evans said: "This decision has been made for two reasons. The first because of the failure of Ukip to capitalise on their previous successes at a national level, where they have been dogged by repeated infighting and scandals.

"And secondly locally because of the fact that local election pledges before the 2015 election have been largely unfulfilled.

"Manston Airport and the adoption by the council of the flawed and misleading Avia report [which claimed the airport was not "financially viable" but has been criticised by pro-airport groups] for the local plan being a major factor in my decision, as this actively supports the building of houses on the site."

CHANGE: Cllr Ken Gregory, Cllr Peter Evans, Cllr Emma Dawson

Leader of the Conservative group on Thanet council, Bob Bayford, said: "Peter Evans will make a significant contribution to the work of our group and we are pleased to have him on board. We have known for some time that he has been considering his future following [council leader Chris] Wells' U-turn on his 'we will save Manston' election pledge and I would not be surprised if other members currently sitting as Ukip councillors seek to follow him."

However, in a scathing email exchange seen by KoS, Cllr Wells said: "I was surprised and saddened to receive formal notice from you after the story had appeared on social media and I tried to contact you. I do think the party which has worked with you over several years deserved better.

"Enjoy your moment of fame. In the long run I suspect you will realise all is not what it seems in Tory heaven; I should know, I've been there!"

March over health cuts

THOUSANDS of campaigners were due to march this weekend against cuts to hospital services in east Kent.

East Kent Hospitals trust has announced controversial temporary changes set to affect stroke patients, while also moving more than half of its junior doctors in Canterbury.

Chair of the Concern for Health in East Kent (CHEK) group, Ken Rogers, said: "The NHS is important to everyone and most will use it. With the possibility looming of services in east Kent being cut to the bone this is a chance to show the strength of feeling against those cuts."

Documentary into murders

THE first episode of a two-part BBC documentary which re-examines the brutal killings of Lin and Megan Russell more than 20 years ago aired this week, looking to "uncover the truth" of an attack which stunned the nation.

Michael Stone was convicted of the murders in 1997 but has protested his innocence ever since. The Chillenden Murders concludes on BBC2 at 9pm on Tuesday.

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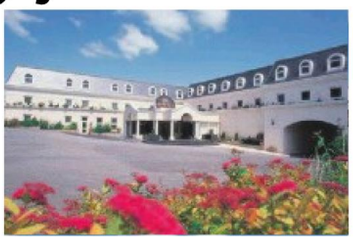

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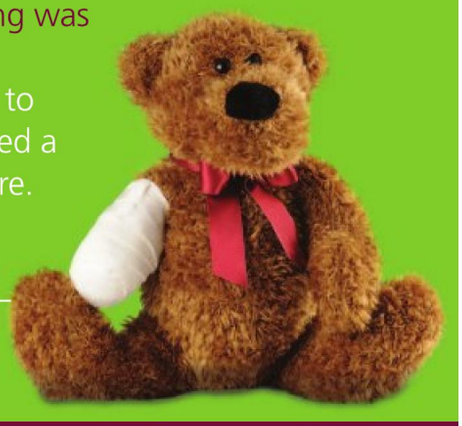

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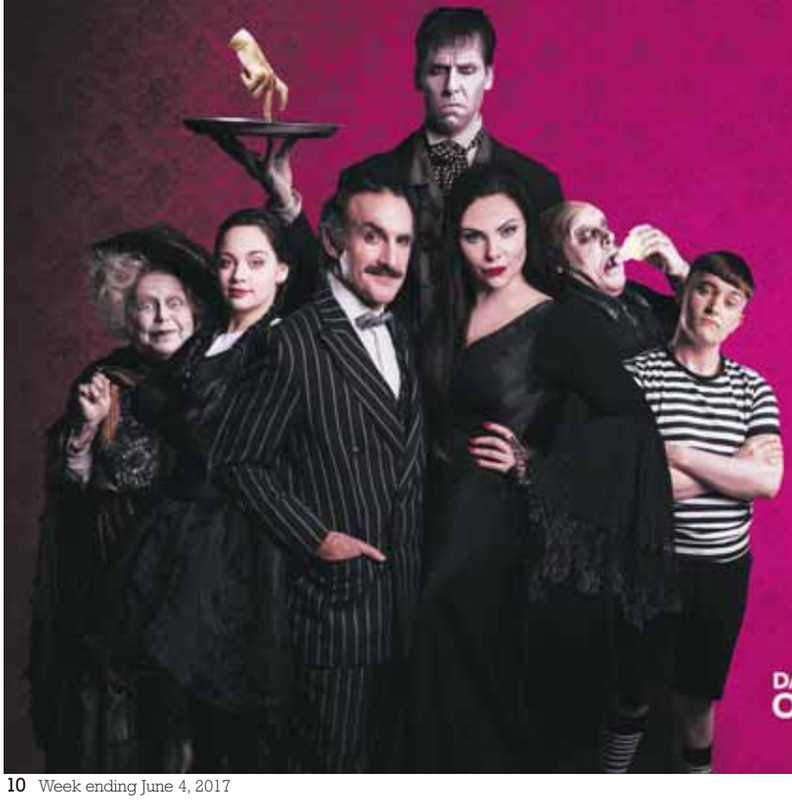

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Heseltine sacking stalls progress on ambitious plan for Thames Estuary

The Tory peer was axed earlier this year by the government but has not been replaced at the heart of a commission that looks to kickstart regeneration along the north Kent coast

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

PLANS to regenerate the north Kent coast into a world-class creative industries district have stalled almost three months after the head of a body responsible for delivering growth in the area was sacked.

Lord Michael Heseltine was axed as a government adviser for rebelling over Brexit in March, but his position as chairman of the Thames Estuary Growth Commission was unclear for some time.

Now the government has confirmed he no longer has any involvement in the commission, which has been tasked with developing an ambitious vision and delivery plan for north Kent, south Essex and east London, up to 2050.

There were fears it put proposals for the estuary area - which stretches from Canary Wharf in the capital all the way to Thanet, via Canterbury, Dartford, Gravesham, Medway and Swale - under threat, after business chiefs wrote to Lord Heseltine asking for his backing in developing a masterplan for the region.

The letter, from mayor of London Sadiq Khan and economic champions, South East Local Enterprise Partnership, which works to drive growth in the county, urged the Tory peer to support plans for the estuary to become an internationally-renowned centre to build, innovate and test creative new ideas.

Among these ideas was a cutting-edge visual arts training academy at Margate's hugely successful Turner Contemporary, as well as a new industrial research laboratory for prototyping, skills development and production in Kent, and a national theatre-making studios complex in Bexley.

Kent County Council's cabinet member for economic growth, Mark Dance, admitted chiefs are still sitting under a cloud of uncertainty with a new chairman yet to be appointed, and that the authority had been left in limbo in recent weeks.

He told KoS: "They were ready to produce a report and that was held off for a number of reasons, including purdah because of the election, but work is going on behind the scenes, I am assured.

"If you've got a chairman that is favoured by government, he can really influence them, and Heseltine was special – he loved Discovery Park [enterprise zone in Sandwich].

"So we want to know who the chairman is, but that won't be decided until all the jobs have been handed out after the election. We have got a weather eye on it.

"It taught us to think 30 to 50 years ahead which was tough stuff: how can we make better use of the river? Will it be an alternative way of travelling? How can we expand our creative business? All that was fed in, but we have had no feedback at all.

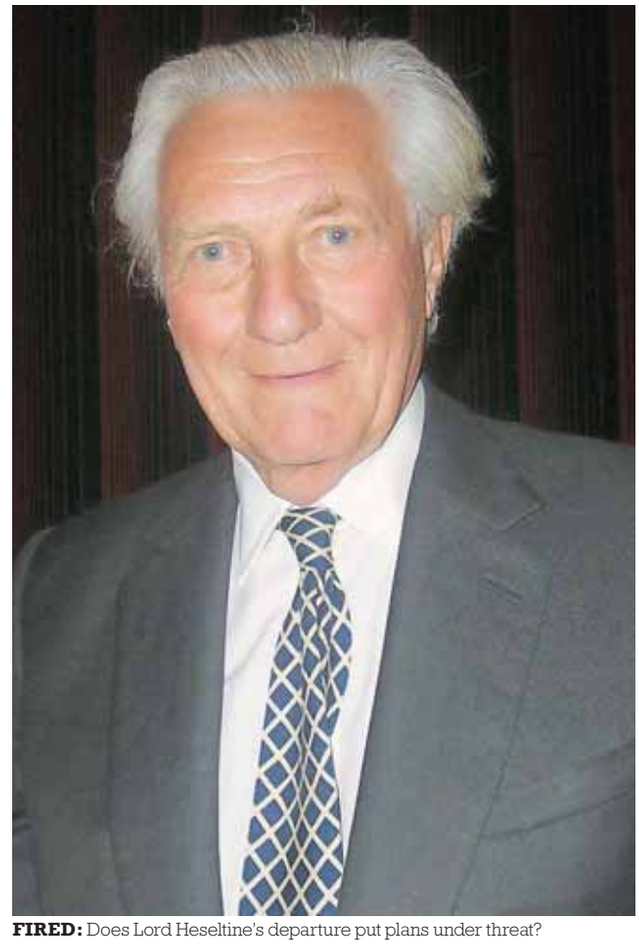
"They were just about to release so it is the worst possible timing.

"It really is a great coastal type of initiative that works, no doubt about it, but we are anxious and feel a little frustrated."

A government spokesperson told KoS: "The Department for Communities and Local Government continues to provide secretariat support to the Thames Estuary Commission.

"The commission's work to set a vision for growth in the Thames Estuary continues, and it will be for the next government to decide how this is taken forward."

The creative sector is growing at a rapid rate across Kent, adding significant value to the local economy, but skills shortages are threatening to stifle growth, as businesses struggle to get employees who have the required abilities.



FIRED: Does Lord Heseltine's departure put plans under threat?

Creative businesses require specific skills that need to be developed through education and training, with the UK Commission for Employment and Skills predicting a further 1.2 million new workers are needed over the next decade.

To remedy that, the Canterbury School for Visual Arts (CSVA) has been launched at Canterbury College.

The new curriculum includes key creative elements like graphic design, marketing, photography and art & design, incorporating specialist pathways which directly feed into local economic needs.

Nationally the sector generates the equivalent of £9.2m per hour and has enjoyed strong growth in the south east.

Between 2010 and 2015, Kent saw a rise of 27.9 per cent in the creative industry sector.

Several factors have galvanised this growth, with rising rental costs in London leading to an influx of creative businesses relocating to the county.

Additionally, culturally-led regeneration spurred on by the likes of the Turner gallery - which last month announced it will host the prestigious Turner prize in Margate in 2019 - has led to an increase in visitor-led business.

In 2014/15 the gallery created 149 fulltime jobs, contributing £6.62m to the local economy.

The CSVA maintains strong relationships with Turner Contemporary and many other significant creative employers in the area, and state-of-the-art facilities ensure students receive the best possible training in their specialist field, ensuring they are ready for the workplace.

Simon Wakeman is the managing director of creative agency Deeson in Canterbury, and admits there are significant challenges to getting the right skillset at his business.

"As a leading digital and creative agency, Deeson recognises the challenges of building digital and creative skills in the east Kent area," he said.

"We welcome the work that the Canterbury School of Visual Arts is doing with the digital and creative sector to help address these challenges."

Lecturer Ben Kidger highlighted the importance of promoting a career-relevant programme with industry links.

He said: "I run a gallery in Teddington near London and a student asked me for some work experience. She is now studying at university in Leeds but contacted me over the summer.

"She needed more work experience because that part of her course was completely lacking, with seemingly no links to industry.

"What we are doing here is sharing contacts - it's increasingly important to develop those links."

Lucy McLeod, head of Canterbury College, added: "The creative sector is experiencing significant growth right now.

"As a college which is committed to delivering the right skills for both students and local employers, we're proud of the new CSVA offer.

"It will help to meet the skills gaps which are developing, and our work to engage employers will deliver students who are better able to transition into employment when they leave Canterbury College."

SUCCESS: The popular Turner Contemporary in Margate is at the heart of plans to stimulate creative business

Labour win could halt crossing

As the feeling of opposition towards the Lower Thames Crossing grows in Essex, a shadow cabinet minister claims Labour would re-evaluate all options if elected on Thursday. How did Kent respond?

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

A LABOUR government elected next week would halts plans for a Lower Thames Crossing and re-evaluate "all options", it has been claimed.

The Department for Transport announced earlier this year it was to move forward with plans for a £6 billion crossing east of Gravesend to ease notorious congestion seen at the exisiting Dartford Crossing.

The planned route will run from the M25 near North Ockendon in Essex, cross the A13 at Orsett before a new link road on the Kent side of the Thames will then take traffic to the A2 near Shorne, close to where the route becomes the M2.

However, while the decision was welcomed in Dartford, it proved controversial among campaigners on both sides of the river, with some bodies considering launching a fight against it through the courts.

In the Essex constituency of Thurrock, Conservative candidate Jackie Price-Doyle met with prime minister Theresa May to outline local opposition to the plans, and Labour candidate John Kent has also campaigned against what he believes will be a "disastrous" route through the countryside.

Now, in a bold statement just days before voters take to the polls in the general election, shadow transport secretary Andy McDonald has appeared to pledge a rethink of the controversial plan if Labour wins power.

He said this week: "John Kent has presented a very powerful case on behalf of Thurrock residents about the route of the new Lower Thames Crossing through the Thurrock countryside.

"He forcefully makes the case that the legitimate concerns of local residents have not been fully considered as to the damage this crossing would cause in terms of air pollution, environmental impacts and loss of homes.

"An incoming Labour government will look again at all options – including the options to the east of Thurrock that were prematurely dropped.

"Before we agree to spending £6.5 billion we have to be sure that we will actually resolve the problem of congestion around the existing crossing and that is then done in a way that does as little damage as possible."

However, despite strong opposition in Kent, where campaigners have even accused Highways England of manipulating data in its consultation - the largest ever for a UK road project with some 47,000 responses - there appears to be some acceptance of the inevitable.

Shorne Parish Council confirmed it had sought opinion from a barrister over a potential fight, but was told there were "insufficient legal grounds" for a successful challenge against the consultation process, and that a challenge on the decision itself would be "doubtful".

CONTROVERSIAL: Many authorities and bodies have backed the crossing, but strong opposition remains in some areas on both sides of the river

Gravesham councillor Bryan Sweetland, who quit his cabinet post on Kent County Council over the row, confirmed a fighting fund of £150,000 is set aside for a potential judicial review, but would also need to take legal advice as to whether such a move would be possible or practical "with a slim chance of winning".

Responding to the revelations this week, Conservative candidate for Dartford, Gareth Johnson, told KoS: "This is another reason why a Labour government would be a disaster for our town.

"Dartford couldn't cope with another crossing but they now want to overturn it.

"What needs to be done is to get on with building the crossing because it's a sensible decision and the only option that actually works, so I'm surprised we have got this announcement."

The crossing verdict was largely supported by a number of key organisations and bodies across the county, including economic champions South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), the Port of Dover, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, Kent Invicta Chamber, Eurotunnel as well as Kent County Council and Medway Council.

Leader of the Labour group on Dartford Borough Council, Jonathon Hawkes, disagreed with his party's comments, however, joining Mr Johnson in claiming delaying construction, or reconsidering where the crossing should be built altogether, would only exacerbate the current problems in the north of the county.

He told KoS: "My position has not changed. We campaigned aggressively for the crossing to be built at option C for Gravesend and it should be built as soon as possible.

"Delays would not be right for Dartford, for Gravesend or for the region as a whole.

"We need to get going on this project so we can start to put the solution in place and reduce congestion.

"The crossing is not a magic bullet, it's not the only thing that will solve the problem, but it's a necessary step.

"[Disagreeing with national party chiefs] doesn't make me uncomfortable - what has been clear throughout is people have a lot of different views - from Thurrock, to Gravesend, to Dartford - and I recognise and respect those views.

"I have never been one to support the approach taken by the Conservatives to pit one area of Kent against another. We need to work through the issues together."

Cllr Hawkes has also previously called for cash generated from the Dartford Crossing to be reinvested in infrastructure locally, after it was revealed the bridge and tunnels generated profits of some £57m for the year ending March 31, 2016.

Conservative candidate for Gravesham, Adam Holloway, has been fiercely opposed to Option C, but declined to make a response to Labour's comments.

ACTION: Tory candidate for Dartford Gareth Johnson demands progress

Quizzed on whether his seat was under threat in next week's election because of the crossing verdict, Mr Holloway told us earlier this year: "I don't know and in truth I'm not bothered.

"I know what I've done over the last 10 years and this issue is much more important than whether they vote for me, to be honest."

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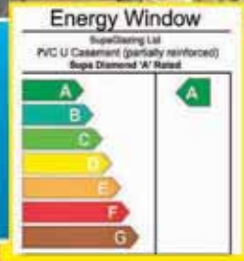

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Tactical voting the only hope for opposition to stop Tories

Labour has dramatically closed the gap on the Conservatives in the polls with just days left until the general election, but a University of Kent academic still believes it will be a big ask to expect anything other than a blue triumph

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

TACTICAL voting is the only way of stopping another Conservative clean sweep in next week's general election, an academic has claimed.

With a landslide Tory majority expected both here in Kent and nationwide on June 8, supporters of some opposition parties are encouraging the electorate to vote tactically when they take to the polls in a bid to stop more blue domination.

The process works by encouraging so-called "progressive" parties to club together and back the candidate with the best chance of defeating the Conservatives.

Green Party chiefs have successfully orchestrated a cross-party alliance in nearby Brighton by convincing the Liberal Democrats not to stand against party leader Caroline Lucas, who was the constituency MP before parliament dissolved last month.

The Greens have tried to drum up support for a similar deal in Kent with Labour as well as the Lib Dems, but these hopes have been emphatically dashed by the red and yellow parties, who are also contesting all 17 seats in the county.

But in a county as traditionally blue as Kent, Richard Whitman, professor of politics and international relations at the University of Kent, believes such a voting pattern is their only hope of standing any chance of winning local seats.

He told KoS: "Tactical voting is the great unknown, if they tactically vote you have the potential for an upset or at least something interesting.

"The Lib Dems are not picking up the support you might expect from Remainers and it will be interesting to see how the 48 per cent [who voted to stay in the EU] position themselves. But tactical voting is absolutely the only way they can do that, certainly in Kent.

"I live in Maidstone and the Weald and if you look at the way the vote stacks up there, you would need a significant defection and then some."

Tory Helen Grant won that particular seat in 2015 by some 10,000 votes, and a majority of 21.4 per cent - a trend that's proved pretty consistent across the county.

The Conservative stronghold was tightened last month in the county council elections, as they romped to victory, claiming 67 of the 81 seats at County Hall, wiping out Ukip's entire representation in the process.

PRESSURE: Theresa May has faced a backlash this week but is still favourite to be PM

Indeed, Professor Whitman suggests the prospect of what many consider a foregone conclusion could affect voter turnout next Thursday, despite increased numbers registering ahead of the deadline a fortnight ago.

"In the EU referendum we saw a pretty amazing turnout," he said.

"We saw a lot of young people rush to register, but we will have to see if they actually turn out to vote.

"People tend to approach general elections in a different way to local or European elections where there was traditionally a lower turnout, because the electorate is often not certain what's at stake.

"General elections are much clearer, they are more familiar with who their MP is, and there's more at stake for people in terms of the economy and taxation and things like that.

"There is a question mark over whether they see it as an unnecessary election and whether people decide to sit on their hands, not least because they feel their vote won't matter.

"People might stay at home because they think the Tories have got it in the bag.

"But we've still got a way to go until the day of the election, the polls have narrowed a bit and the question is how much more they narrow and how people respond to that."

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn sprung a surprise this week by unexpectedly appearing on a televised leaders' debate, despite insisting he

DEBATE: Jeremy Corbyn (right) has closed the gap on the Conservatives in the polls, as party leaders rounded on Theresa May, who didn't show up for a TV debate earlier this week

would not engage in one unless Theresa May also featured.

The prime minister resisted the urge to appear herself in Wednesday's showpiece event, and drew some criticism for her absence, but Professor Whitman suggested the impact of such programmes on voters is actually somewhat overplayed.

"Those high profile debates tend not to shift people but to reinforce their views," he said.

"The thing that has shaken people up is the Conservatives' U-turn on social care.

"People probably would not have noticed it without the U-turn and that's a problem for the Conservatives who put so much [emphasis] on the prime minister's leadership."

One interesting angle in this election, will be the performance of Ukip, which in recent years has soared in popularity to become the county's second biggest party.

It became the main party of opposition on Kent County Council in 2013, and its candidates finished second in a number of seats at the 2015 general election, including famously Nigel Farage in South Thanet.

It represented a quite incredible rise compared to five years earlier, when some 13 candidates achieved less than five per cent of the vote and thus lost their £500 deposits.

But suffering with something of an identity crisis following Britain's decision to leave the EU, compounded by a disastrous KCC election, farcical controversies and an increasing number of defections, many wonder just how much Ukip can bring to the table in this election.

"We've had a strong Ukip supporting sentiment in Kent and I do think those voters will move back to the Conservatives," Professor Whitman said.

"The issue will be how well do the other parties perform. It could provide a platform for the next election if the likes of Labour or the Lib Dems do well and can look at seat targeting for next time."

Despite a narrowing in the polls, even in this unpredictable political climate, a blue victory seems inevitable, and it's one Professor Whitman can't see past.

"I expect a majority of between 40 and 60 - not quite the landslide we were perhaps told when it was called but more than enough to see the government through.

"Anything less than a 40-seat majority and that would be a pretty disastrous election.

"It's theirs to lose. Kent is a bellweather and if the Tories don't do well here it could get interesting, but this is where they have core support, it's where they harvest a lot of votes."

Continued to page 16

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RURAL CHIEFS FEAR FARMERS 'AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BREAD BASKET'

continued from page 15

FARMERS and rural chiefs fear key issues affecting the industry are being ignored by political parties ahead of next week's general election.

With all manifestos now released for voters to pore over before taking to the polls on Thursday, agricultural workers claim they have been disappointed by not being put at the heart of party pledges.

High Sheriff of Kent, George Jessel, a farmer himself, has led the calls for the government to stop turning its back on the industry and face up to the challenges, as well as potential opportunities, facing it over the coming years, as Britain negotiates its exit from the European Union.

He told us: "We feel farmers are regarded as the bottom of the bread basket, but quite simply, without active farmers there would be no food.

"We are only 60 per cent self-sufficient, we need to find that 40 per cent.

"The public are bored of having sub-standard food brought in cheaply from abroad and as we are heading for Brexit, farming has got to come top of the list.

"Kent is a very agricultural county - although we have huge motorways, high speed links and major ports, 85 per cent is rural, and that is a very important statistic.

"At the same time, government has got to recognise that here in Kent we can put food into London with very few food miles on it quickly and easily. We need a pat on the back and a bit of support."

Mark Lumsdon-Taylor, deputy group principal and deputy CEO of the land-based Hadlow College, which prepares young people for a number of agricultural roles, agreed there needed to be a shake-up of the government's priorities.

"Rural often gets dropped down the order of policies, below taxation, immigration, housing, and many of these issues interlink," he said.

"From our perspective, it seems to be much further down the line than it should be, especially because we are a green nation."

It comes after MPs have tried to lobby ministers for a pilot seasonal workers scheme to help Kent farmers combat a shortage of temporary labour, amid fears county farms are on the brink of going out of business.

However, those calls appear to have fallen on deaf ears, after environment secretary Andrea Leadsom claimed evidence showed that such a scheme is not needed.

"She is wrong, of course we need overseas seasonal workers," Mr Jessel said.

"The average age of a farmer is 65, and I need younger people to come and work on the farm, and we in Kent rely on immigrant labour.

"Those people who come over from Romania and Bulgaria to help are good, decent people.

"They came over in family groups and these are vital to the Kent economy and I don't want that to be upset because of Brexit - they should be able to come here and find a job and get paid.

"The thing that irritiates the farming community is the Defra ministers, it's not one of the forward-moving departments.

"Those who shout loudest get the most, but there's only a limited budget, and I'm concerned our ministers, from all parties, don't shout loudly enough."

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Has seaside park's £25m investment paid off?

We popped along to the re-opening of Margate's Dreamland last week, to see if a winning formula has been found

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

WHEN Dreamland opened two years ago amid much fanfare and hype, it rather quickly became apparent it was more a case of style over substance.

Aimed rather too fairly and squarely at the hipsters from London, it decided that having a small budget would instead mean it had to really work the 'vintage' theme to the point of breathing its very last gasp.

What it rather failed to do was forget the local family from Thanet, or east Kent, or Kent as a whole for that matter.

With a price tag simply to get in, it immediately set itself a bar which it had to reach purely to deliver value for money.

A lack of rides of real clout, little in the way of food and drink and Dreamland suddenly found itself staring down the barrel of not being able to make the sums add up.

Today, though, it has returned with a massive injection of funds to help create something rather more compelling.

Gone is the entrance fee (it was actually scrapped last year and replaced with a pay-per-ride approach which actually started getting people through the door), in comes a host of extra rides and more refreshments, and out goes some of that gaudy awful branding which everyone seemed to think was so cool and kitsch yet failed to actually attract anything resembling mainstream audiences.

The result is a far more pleasing, far more compelling offering.

Now there is plenty more to do and the landscaping is far more polished to make it a more enjoyable place to be. There's plenty of grass, and some nice additions like a rooftop bar.

The vintage theme is still very much abundant - there is, after all, a need to have some form of unique selling point to the park in a hugely competitive marketplace - but it's not the be all and end all.

Dreamland does, after all, use as its biggest attraction a throwback to its hey day. It knows it holds a rather special place in our collective hearts and it would be unwise to not look to spend some of that capital in its marketing.

Certainly the atmosphere is closer than how it once was. The problem, of course, is that what once seemed huge and sprawling to those of us who visited it decades ago, now continues to feel rather compact.

Perhaps it's simply because the perception of theme parks today is of huge sprawling complexes in which you can easily get lost, or maybe simply that we were all a lot smaller as children. Either way, you can comfortably stroll around and see everything in a matter of a few minutes.

But that's not really the point is it?

Dreamland needs to work for Margate not as the one and only place to visit, but as a key part of the seaside town's jigsaw. And it does that now. It brings something decent to the party.

If you have a young family, then the chances are you'll be able to pop in and spend a good few hours here and your kids will absolutely adore it. If you're a little older, then depending on your love of rides (and you need to think more elaborate fairground rather than modern era theme park to get your expectations in check) will determine your enjoyment levels.

There is an element of you make your own fun day and Dreamland is now equipped to facilitate that rather than provide every aspect for you.

Key to its success, one assumes, will be its ability to stage live music events. A large stage dominates the centre of the park, ringed by food and drink stands. The fresh turf in the centre provides a perfect picnic area and with seats set into the bank like an amphitheatre it's pleasing to the eye.

In short, it looks like someone's invested heavily. And assuming the building site to the top left of the site becomes, at some stage, part of the park too, then you can imagine this ultimately becoming really quite special.

There are some issues however. The price and range of food and drink still needs a little work. Granted, the revamped pub by the entrance is probably a sensible idea to focus drinking, but when you boast of a massive street food range, you do need to deliver something a little better than a handful of retro mobile homes selling a pretty limited range of foods. And at such prices. To ask £6 for a burger is one thing when you have a captive audience. When you have an audience who can walk into Margate and buy everything cheaper and then stroll back again, it becomes far less justifiable.

But let's not be too harsh on them at the opening weekend. If the demand is there, we can assume that's something which is easily increased.

The key thing is that Dreamland is now resembling somewhere far more capable of delivering a proper family day out than in the last two years.

Now it really is a key cog in Margate's overall offering. The beautiful main sands, the traditional sea front amusement arcades, the bars and restaurants, the art gallery, it is all coming together rather well.

It isn't how many of us remember it in its hey-day. But then it can never really emulate that again. Time has moved on and we've moved on. But it is at least emerging as a genuine entertainment venue rather than simply a park recalling its past glories and expecting us all to love it, regardless,

It's well worth a visit - bring young kids to extract full value - and given there's more to come in its developmental pipeline, it's done much to silence the critics.

Dreamland's re-opening. Matt Crossick/PA Wire

REPORTER EMILY KING, 23, GIVES A YOUNGER PERSON'S PERSPECTIVE

ARRIVING at Dreamland on opening night, I did so with an open mind.

First impressions were good. The site looked nice and new, and though small in size and compact, I decided straight away that I could easily spend a few hours there.

When we made our way inside, our priority was to find food, and so my two colleagues and I split off to different street food stalls. This is where we hit a stumbling block.

The food was pricey, and took ages to queue for, resulting in me buying and eating mine before either colleague returned to our spot on the grass with theirs.

This admittedly could be due to a lady at the front of the pizza line ordering seven freshly-made pizzas at once, but still, we had to wait for 15-20 minutes for what's meant to be fast food. But, all in all, the grub was tasty, and portion sizes were good.

I had a ball on the rides, dragging my colleagues from one to the next.

Though I was disappointed when we started to queue for Magic Mouse and it broke down, leaving people stuck at the top of the ascent. And although they did fix it before we left, the thought of getting stranded up there put me off having a go.

There are plenty of bars throughout the park, but drink options are sparse, with all bars only having only a handful of options to choose from.

Overall, I had a fun evening, and I would return, but probably not for a while. Maybe prices are something they'll consider reducing in the future.

And as for the mechanical errors, let's put those down to opening night jitters.

Strawberry growers playing waiting game as Wimbledon nears

Kentish fruit has become synonymous with the highlight of the tennis calendar, but some growers are concerned over the impact of the same frosts which hit county vineyards

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

IN one month's time the focus will not be on the outcome of the general election, but how Andy Murray performs on the grass courts of Wimbledon.

And if the highlight of the nation's tennis year is just around the corner, then so must be strawberry season. The only question is will the county's crop serve up a dish of glory this summer or did the sharp frosts of last year prove to be a double-fault too much?

Like most Kent fruit farmers, strawberry producers are nervously awaiting to see how the plants survived the recent frosts.

As we have reported in recent weeks, wine makers were hit hard by the sharp overnight chills last month which damaged delicate young buds.

And once again, it seems geography will prove a key factor in how they fared.

Max Williams runs Stanhill Farm Shop where they grow six acres of strawberries.

He told us: "We still don't know how badly we have been hit by the frosts that affected the vineyards.

"Just like them, we rely on the flowers to survive. Some of those that flowered early this year were hit by the frosts, but many did survive because they had not quite reached the flowering stage.

"Now we have to sit and wait until June to see how the weather goes. We need it sunny and warm during the day and raining at night, just like most people too.

"So it is fingers crossed to see how it all turns out, but I am quietly confident."

Marion Regan is manageing director at Hugh Lowe Farms in Mereworth, near Maidstone. It has been the official supplier of strawberries to Wimbledon for over 25 years. Failure for them is not an option.

She explains: "Thankfully our polytunnels protected the strawberry flowers from the recent frosts and the raspberries were not in a vulnerable position.

"Having started with a very early variety, Flair, back at the end of April, we are already picking a good, and flavourful crop of strawberries, including the new variety Driscolls Elizabeth, and Malling Centenary both of which were bred in Kent.

"This season seems very good for fruit quality, as we had a nice early start to the spring, then a period of cooler weather which meant the plants weren't forced too hard. Now luckily the weather is warming up just in time, and light levels have been good which augurs well for the sweetness of the strawberries and the early raspberries which are now coming on.

"We anticipate picking lovely berries through to November, and people should look out for Kent-grown Dris-

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colls Victoria, a fabulous tasting sweet blackberry, and Driscolls Zara, a new late strawberry with a great flavour.

"I think Kent growers have about 25 per cent of the national market for strawberries, but over 40 per cent of the raspberries and blackberries grown in the UK come from our county."

For them, the humble fruit is their essential business. An incredible 30 tonnes will be sent to SW19 alone this year. And with Brexit around the corner, there is a challenge facing many in terms of getting the workers in place to harvest them. Traditionally, so much of the work is done by a migrant work force. So will Brexit cause problems?

Adds Marion Regan: "We rely very much on people from other EU countries coming to hand pick our crops. I hope that the government recognises how important this is. Together with other growers, like salad growers, we are making every effort to explain that we need a reliable source of able and hardworking seasonal staff.

"However I'm confident that post Brexit we will be able to continue offering attractive seasonal work to these great people under some kind of seasonal permit scheme."

With Kent such a key player in the strawberry industry, it will be no surprise it continues to work hard to protect its position.

A spokesman for local food and drink producers Produced in Kent explained: "Kent produces some of the world's finest strawberries and we are lucky that we can buy them so easily.

"The strawberry season which 25 years ago was a mere six weeks long usually runs from April to October, but this year saw some specially cultivated strawberries in stores in February.

"The Kent season is well underway, having benefitted from a colder winter, which strawberries need, followed by early March sunshine which brought the harvest along.

"Recent freezing temperatures have caused issues. Proof if it was needed that our farmers are at the mercy of Mother Nature. It's not just the UK with crops across Europe and the US affected.

"All the more reason to buy Kentish strawberries and support our local farming communities.

"The market for strawberries continues to grow and the growers are responding with new varieties and cultivation methods to keep up with demand, while maintaining the quality of the fruit.

"Last year saw the introduction of the Malling Centenary, bred at East Malling Research - one of the major organisation in the UK for research on horticultural crops. The Malling Centenary has taken northern Europe by storm and has replaced established varieties such as Elsanta for several of Kent's key growers. Its richer, deeper flavour has proved a real winner with growers and customers alike."

Trade organisation British Summer Fruits said the feedback it was getting so far suggested optimism rather than pessimism: "Growers are predicting a six per cent rise in production this year.

"The cool, dry winter, coupled with recent warm weather, which saw temperatures rise to 26C in one of the hottest days of the year, has created the perfect growing conditions for this year's crop of strawberries.

"The deliciously juicy and slow-ripened strawberries are now on supermarket shelves in abundance, helping to meet the increasing consumer demand for one of the UK's favourite fruits.

"Over the past year, more than 126 000 tonnes of strawberries were sold in the UK, with shoppers spending more than £580 million on the delectable berry.

"The consumption of fresh berries, which includes strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and blueberries, has grown by an impressive 132 percent since 2007, outstripping the 49 percent increase of fruit consumption as a whole."

Strawberries are the only fruit to carry their seeds on the outside – around 200 of them.

They are also a member of the rose family, and eight strawberries have more vitamin C than an orange.

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Reflecting on 350 years since our devastating naval defeat

Commemorations of the battle which left Medway in flames begin next week

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

IF YOU thought relations with our European neighbours were strained today, post Brexit, it is as nothing compared to some 350 years ago.

Because then the Dutch sailed down the Medway with war on their minds and all but wiped out the naval ships moored at Chatham, in what would prove to be defining moment in British naval history.

The Battle of Medway was vicious and devastating.

Taking place in June 1667, it blew a huge hole in an already depleted and underfunding navy and was one of the greatest disasters in England's naval history.

By the time it was over, dozens of ships were destroyed. The Medway was described as a "river in flames".

Now to commemorate this remarkable moment in our history, a special series of events is taking place this month. It will look to tell the story of what happened in this eventful period of history.

Explains local MP and heritage minister Tracey Crouch: "This will bring to life one of the landmark events in the history of the UK. It's an excellent example of what our heritage sector leads the world in, telling stories in richly imaginative ways. With thousands of people from the UK and abroad due to visit during the festival, it will truly put Medway on the map."

One of the big showpiece events will take place on June 8 at the Historic Dockyard Chatham.

A host of VIPs - including representatives from the Netherlands and senior Royal Navy officials, will gather for speeches, parade and royal salute. Some 2,000 people are expected to attened the event.

Richard Holdsworth, preservation and education director at Chatham Historic Dockyard, where many of the events will be staged, explained: "The events of June 1667 marked a significant moment in our national story and we are delighted at this opportunity to take part in the celebrations and display extraordinary objects from the period held in Dutch and British national collections.

DEFENCE: Upnor Castle

"Visitors will also be able to discover the role the dockyard and the people of Chatham played during this and other important events in British and world history."

So why did the Battle of Medway take place?

It was, in many respects, the culmination of years of tension between the Dutch and English. At its heart was conflict over trade routes and who ruled the oceans.

The second Anglo Dutch war had started in March 1665 as the two sides squabbled over sea and trade routes.

The Dutch were keen to flex their muscles after winning its independence from Spain in 1648, and were intent on building up a vast navy to complement its large merchant fleet.

Now tensions rose and spilled into war over the ability to control the highly lucrative markets in both the Far East and West Indies.

The Dutch building campaign saw it swiftly become Europe's strongest nation with England unable to match its building power after losing access to vital trade tourtes in both the Mediterranean and the Baltic.

While England toiled, the Dutch enjoyed what became known at the Dutch Golden Age.

As the English took over Dutch colonies in Africa, the provocations became all too much and the Netherlands responded with force.

Under the command of Lieutenant Admiral Michiel de Ruyter, Dutch ships took back the African interests along with English trade stations there.

In 1665, Dutch ships opened fire on English in the colonies when they felt threatened and Charles II declared war on March 4 1665.

England was poorer than the Dutch - as was its navy. The Great Fire of London and Great Plague had depleted resources and manpower. With its fi-

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LEADER: Dutch Lieutenant Admiral Michiel de Ruyter

nances in deep trouble, sailors were no longer being paid and morale was low.

The English won the Battle of Lowestoft that same year, but for every ship the English built, the Dutch had seven.

By 1667, the remaining English 'heavy ships' were laid up in Medway.

Charles entered peace talks with the Dutch but also secretly negotiated with France to join the fight against the Dutch.

Leading Dutch politician Johan de Witt planned to land his marines at Chatham, and be done with the war once and for all and destroy the last of the British navy.

Under Lieutenant Admiral Michiel de Ruyter, the Dutch captured the fort at Sheerness before entering the River Medway to attack the English fleet at Chatham.

They broke through a literal defence chain, designed to protect the resting fleet and, despite fire from Upnor Castle, towed away the Royal Charles, England's flagship and burned a number of ships. To prevent their capture and block the channel, the Royal Navy sank around 30 of its largest ships.

Although the dockyard was spared by the arrival of troops and artillery, the attack was nevertheless a humiliating defeat for the English.

It was feared that had the dockyard itself been destroyed, it could have set the English navy back an entire generation.

In Holland, the action marked the highpoint of the Dutch Golden Age.

Despite proving to be a crushing loss for the English, The Dutch raid heralded the start of a period of great financial investment in the English naval fleet and as a result, led to it becoming the most powerful in the world, for generations to come.

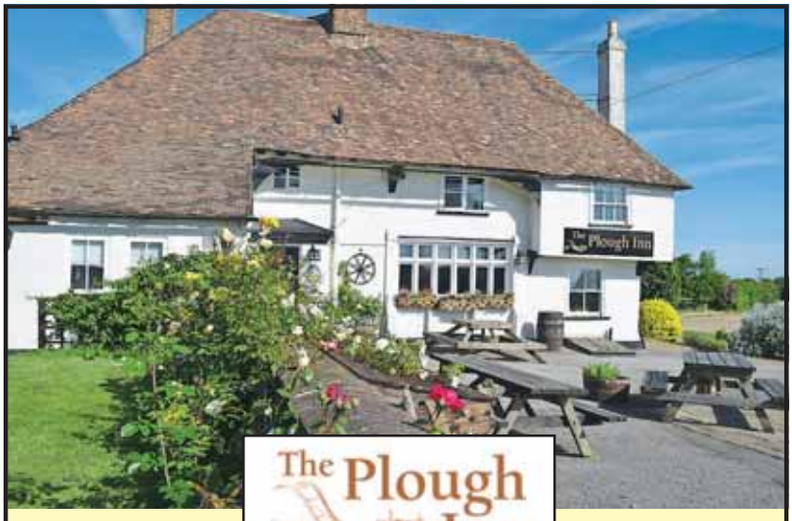
Chatham, in particular, benefitted from this, becoming one of the great ports for shipbuilding.

A Medway Council spokesman said: "Rochester has a unique identity with its iconic Norman castle and cathedral, historic buildings and museums, as well as connections with Charles Dickens. Chatham's maritime history includes The Historic Dockyard Chatham, an award winning attraction. The dockyard's defences include Upnor Castle, Fort Amherst, the Great Lines Heritage Park and the Royal Engineers Museum, amongst others. Many of these sites were all involved in, or are a result of, the Battle of Medway."

One of the biggest events will take place on June 17 from 2pm at St Mary's island, the Ship & Trades, the Outlet Centre, Chatham Historic Dockyard and Upnor Reach.

Medway in Flames will be the finale to a string of special events with live music, water activities and a spectacular firework display.

For full details of what is planned, visit www.medway.gov.uk.



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INSPIRING: Jane hopes for freedom and fulfilment

National Theatre to bring Bronte classic to the stage

Director, Sally Cookson, said turning Jane Eyre into a play was "daunting"

THE NATIONAL Theatre's adaptation of Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre is coming to Canterbury in June.

The production tells the 170-year-old story of one woman's fight for freedom and fulfilment. From her beginnings as an orphan, Jane Eyre's heroine faces life's obstacles, surviving poverty, injustice and the discovery of betrayal before taking the decision to follow her heart.

The story has been adapted many times before, twice for TV by the BBC when in 1983 Zelah Clarke played Jane, Timothy Dalton played Mr Rochester, and Collette Barker played Helen Burnes. And then again in 2006 starring Toby Stephens as Mr Rochester, Ruth Wilson as Jane, and Georgie Henley as young Jane.

Director, Sally Cookson, said: "Adapting a novel for the stage is a challenging prospect - espaecially when that novel is cited as many people's favourite of all time.

"It is always dauting when you're working on a story which everyone knows so well, because you want to surprise and maybe challenge people's expectations, without losing any of the things which make them like the story in the first place.

"I chose this particular title because it's a story that I love and have enjoyed a close relationship with ever since I was intrigued, as a child, by Orson Welles' black and white melodrama with fabulous music by Bernard Herrman.

"I didn't actually read the novel until I was in my early twenties and I remember thinking while I read it: 'this is a clarion cry for equal opportunities for women, not a story about a passive female who will do anything for her hunky boss'.

"I was struck by how modern Jane seemed - her spirit and strong will, her peculiar and brilliant mind striving for personal freedom to be who she is, lashing out against any constraint that prevents her from being herself. She was exactly the sort of person I wanted to be."

Sally is an associate artist of Bristol Old Vic, where her productions include Treasure Island and Peter Pan; and Boing!, Cinderella, an adaptation of Jacqueline Wilson's Hetty Feather, and Romeo and Juliet.

Nadia Clifford takes the central role of Jane Eyre. Manchester born and bred, she previously appeared at the National Theatre in Alistair McDowell's sell-out production of Pomona.

Tim Delap will make his National Theatre debut as Rochester.

They are joined by Hannah Bristow who will play Helen Burns, Adele, St John, Grace Poole, and Abbot, Matthew Churcher as a musician, Alex Heane as a musician, Melanie Marshall as Bertha and Mason, Paul Mundell as Mr Brocklehurst, Pilot, and Mason, David Ridley as a musician, Evelyn Miller as Bessie, Blanche Ingram, and Diana, and Lynda Rook as Mrs Reed, and Mrs Fairfax.

The cast is completed by Ben Cutler, Jenny Johns, Dami Olukoya, Francesca Tomlinson and Phoebe Vigor.

Jane Eyre, which played to sold-out audiences at the National Theatre's Lyttelton Theatre, is at The Marlowe Theatre from June 19-24.

For more information and tickets visit marlowtheatre.com

There will also be production with sign language.

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JOAN, black lady young looking 50yrs, loves life. Call to hear more and perhaps meet up. ACA **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427317**

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. **Tel: 0906 515 3034 Box 425979**

ELAINE, 54yrs attractive brunette lady, originally from Scotland, petite and shy. WLTM sensitive male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427319**

JASMINE, 34yrs, non smoking first time dater! Easy going, attractive and hard working. Due to work commitments I'm looking for a no strings companion any age. Looks unimportant must have GSOH. **Tel: 0906 515 3014 Box 426201**

SASHA 44yrs feminine attractive lady, loves nights out, cosy nights at home. Call me if you are interested in me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427335**

HARRIETT 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. **Tel: 0906 515 3030 Box 426205**

SIMONE, attractive lady seeking genuine man, I'm in my 60s but young looking. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427337**

PIA, Asian lady, 57yrs, very caring and a little subservient and quiet. I am a good cook and loyal friend. Pls text me if you are kind man 55+ **Text Only. Mailbox 4013378**

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MARGARET, late 60s widow who looks much younger! Blue eyed blonde, varied interests, solvent. WLTM n/s gent who is down to earth. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427339**

NATALIA, black beauty! I am late 50s but still fit with a good figure and lovely skin and eyes. I would like to meet a nice white gentleman, older than myself for chats, maybe more. **Text Only. Mailbox 4107799**

SANDRA but call me Sandy. I'm 67yrs young petite dark haired smart lady with curves. Hoping to meet a gent who is kind with GSOH **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427341**

JULIE, 68yrs but very fit and young looking. Married to an older gent so hoping to meet someone much much younger. Text Me. **Text Only: 4193435**

SUSAN, 72yrs, divorcee, tall, slim and attractive. Seeking gent for lunches, friendship, leading to more. I'm solvent with my own home. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427343**

KAREN, late 50's seeking discreet gent any age/area for daytime meetings. **Text Only. Box: 4194757**

ATTRACTIVE Caribbean lady 59yrs, very jolly and fun seeking gent any age who must love good times. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425323**

HELEN, mid 50s naughty lady seeks some fun times with gent any age. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424493**

CAROLINE, attractive mature lady, various interests, hoping to meet a smart gent for socialising, perhaps leading to something more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426347**

JOY happily married, bi curious, blonde hair, blue eyes, big boobs, seeks someone to join in a bit of bedroom fun! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426845**

ANNE blonde hair, blue eyes, seeks males for no strings adult fun! Call and leave a number for me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426843**

MATURE lady 70s, various interests but a bit lonely, hoping to meet a gent to cheer me up, come on, we can have some fun together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426349**

GENTS, please call me if you are looking to meet a kind sincere lady for nights at the theatre, socialising etc. You can call or text me. I promise to reply, I'm very genuine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426345**

JACKIE is 54yrs and an attractive easygoing brunette, she's hoping to meet a similar minded chap for some fun, dates, chats, text or call me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426343**

ATTRACTIVE blonde lady, 54yrs, loyal, romantic and solvent hoping to meet a gent with GSOH for romance, sensual times and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426341**

KAREN, 52yrs, attractive with GSOH, very active and outgoing. If you are 40+ give me a call, lets have a chat, maybe meet up. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426339**

LADY, 70, 5ft6, divorced, blonde hair, brown eyes, friendly, lives in the Kent area, likes walking, holidays, WLTM somebody for friendship in the local area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426193**

AMANDA, slim blonde, 50s seeks discreet gent for special times, mutually beneficial to us both. Call now. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425327**

MALE, 55, looking for no strings attached friendship, with a lady 60-70, any status. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426133**

MALE, 6ft, brown hair and blue eyes, warm and understanding, likes dining out and cosy nights in, lots of fun, friendship and holidays. Looking for a lady over 48. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426057**

EASYGOING male, 49, 6ft, well built, seeks female to wine/dine and have fun times with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 401401**

CARING sociable, GSOH, slim, attractive, married gent, 67, feels discarded and lonely, seeks likewise lady 60+ for trips out, dining etc. **Text only. Mailbox: 5082918**

SIX foot guy, mature, looking for someone special to spend some quality time with. Please leave me a message I would love to hear from you! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420163**

PROFESSIONAL gentleman, 64, widowed, own house, loves holidays abroad, reading, eating out, eating in and shows, WLTM a lady of similar age to share interests and happy times together hopefully leading to lasting relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425787**

MALE, 70s, would like to meet slim lady 60 plus. **Text only. Mailbox: 4505135**

MALCOLM, 60 something gent, own hair and teeth, GSOH, genuine and Kind WLTM sincere lady to wine and dine. Please call. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425335**

PROFESSIONAL gent, 44yrs, tall, attractive and genuine. Seeks genuine feminine lady for genuine romance. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425333**

PIERS, 56yrs, romantic gent WLTM lady to wine, dine, spoil. I'm kind, caring, generous pls call me. Single mums welcome. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425331**

59YR old male, likes country walks, pub lunches, seeks lady for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424685**

MALE, 58, wishes to meet attractive female, into music, live bands, cinema and some sports, for nights out socialising and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424979**

Men Seeking

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received. mydate24

TALL, lively old boy, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks tactile lady for company and jolly jaunts. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425021**

MALE, 58, slim build, 5ft9, brown eyes, hard working, enjoys fishing and socialising, looking for no stings attached fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427173**

HI ladies, looking for either NSA fun or LTR. I am single/work/live in own house. **Text only. Mailbox: 4509325**

LOCAL 70 year old young male, now single, nice appearance and dresser, looking for fun and friendship with a lady, 55-70, possible holidays. Can travel. Please ring. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426897**

LIVELY mature gent, OHAC, near sea in Folkestone, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks lady companion/lover, 58-68 yo. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422621**

CARING, sociable male, 72, N/S, likes all types of music, walking, meals out, looking for a lady for friendship at first. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426865**

KENT man, retired engineer, solvent, enjoys holidays, meals out, good conversation, WLTM a slim lady, 60-70, with a GSOH, to share these times and hopefully become friends. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426887**

GUY, 50, 6ft tall, calm and kind, good company, seeking lovely lady for good times and fun and loving. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425369**

RETIRED, smart, 68 year old, 5ft5, I enjoy eating out, walking, holidays and golf, WLTM a slim, attractive lady, 60-68, for a loving, tender relationship, to enjoy these times with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421853**

MALE divorced, 6ft, well built, seeking fun time girl for good times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412717**

HARRY 50, ex soldier, 6ft, well built, seeking lady to wine and dine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417015**

50YR old divorced white male, passionate, strong, seeking caring lady for romantic, loving relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418641**

BARRY, 50, 6ft 4ins, well built, divorced gent, looking to date calm and kind lovely lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421195**

JERRY, 66, brown hair, brown eyes, recently widowed, love to walk my dog, WLTM compatible lady for companionship and to see where things go. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426387**

LOCAL man, seeks lady for friendship possibly more, for romantic dates and good times together, hope to hear from you. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426195**

HANDSOME male, mid 40s, dark hair, hazel eyes, wishes to meet appropriate female for fun, friendship and perhaps more, please get in touch if interested. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422587**

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HELLO, mature gentleman looking for a lady who is caring, likes holidays, karaoke, meals out, country walks and cinema. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425401**

CHRIS, 49yrs honest gent seeks lady 45-55 for socialising, friendship, maybe leading to romance. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425345**

PETER, sincere solvent gent 70s seeks lady to wine dine, foreign travel, all expenses paid. I would love a traveling companion. Genuine advertiser. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425343**

MALE 50 seeks mature, home loving lady, 60 plus who enjoys cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424683**

GENUINE gentleman, family minded, kind, generous seeks lady 55-75 for wining, dining and wine and laughter. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425329**

NICE looking 55 year old male WLTM sincere lady, any age, for friendship, outings, holidays abroad etc. Love the sun. **Text only. Mailbox: 4922399**

DENTAL practitioner, 44, 6ft, slim, athletic build, thick dark hair, blue eyes, loves sports, seeks slim feminine sporty lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425087**

EDWARD, 77, looking for a companion South East area of Kent, for holidays, days out, social events, and lots more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423039**

Gay Seeking

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GAY guy, medium build, likes outdoors, DIY, seeking slim, N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 403267**

EASY going guy, 68, likes walks, books, seeks N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411413**

ROB, bi-curious male, 55, seeks likeminded male, crossdresser/TV. Must be discreet. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426287**

MALE, 40s, seeking gym buddy to attend DW gym in the early evenings, similar age. Margate. **Text only. Mailbox: 5779191**

Friends

FEMALE seeking genuine straight female for daytrips, out to meet socially for lunch/coffee. **Text only to Mailbox No:4748240**

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Alt-J venture to Margate for seaside concert at Dreamland

By Emily King
emily.king@archant.co.uk

INDIE band Alt-J are the latest act announced to play at the recently relaunched Dreamland, Margate.

The three-piece, who have received nominations for Best Alternative Album at The Grammys 2015, and Best British Group and Best Album at the Brit Awards 2015, as well as selling out the O2, will be venturing to the seaside for a show this September.

Their performance at Dreamland joins a wave of other musical talent which plans to storm the seaside stage.

Other acts announced to play in the coming months include Gorillaz' Demon Dayz, Toots and the Maytals, Slaves, Sam and the Womp, and The Dub Pistols. Undercover Festival will also be taking place the same week as Alt-J perform.

Formed in 2008 by four friends, who met at Leeds University, they've forged a career by combining elements of electronic, folk and guitar music.

They released their debut album An Awesome Wave in 2012 which won them the Mercury Music Prize, and Ivor Novello Album Award, and three Brit nominations.

Since their popularity has soared, the band have played festivals such as Radio One's Big Weekend, and Reading and Leeds.

The band last performed in Kent in 2012 at independent music festival, In The Woods, which takes place in September every year. Line-up for the event is never revealed until close to the weekend, but artists such as Lianne La Havas and Jack Garratt have taken part before.

They were recently announced to be playing as part of the O2 Arena's 10th birthday celebrations, alongside Ed Sheeran, Jamiroquai, and Celine Dion.

Tickets went on general sale on, for Alt-J's Dreamland performance, on Friday, June 2.

Anyone aged between 14 and 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

They will be performing at the O2 Arena on June 16.

For more information and tickets to their O2 gig, visit www.axs.com.

Tickets to any other Dreamland concerts can be purchased via dreamland.co.uk or by calling 01843 295887.

DIFFERENT: The band's music is a mix of electronic, folk, and guitar music

Oliver's kitchen roadshow

JAMIE Oliver's mobile teaching kitchen is taking to the road this summer, and heading to Crystal Palace for two weeks, from June 2 to 16.

To register for lessons visit jamiesministryoffood.org

Cinema ventures outside

DARTFORD will host free outdoor cinema this summer, bringing E.T., The Jungle Book, and La La Land in Central Park on August 16, 23, and 30.

The free ickets will be available from the council website, from late June - dartford.gov.uk.

Marlowe's funding boost

CANTERBURY'S Marlowe Theatre received £33,900 in funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for youth project, Creed of Spies from July 16-20.

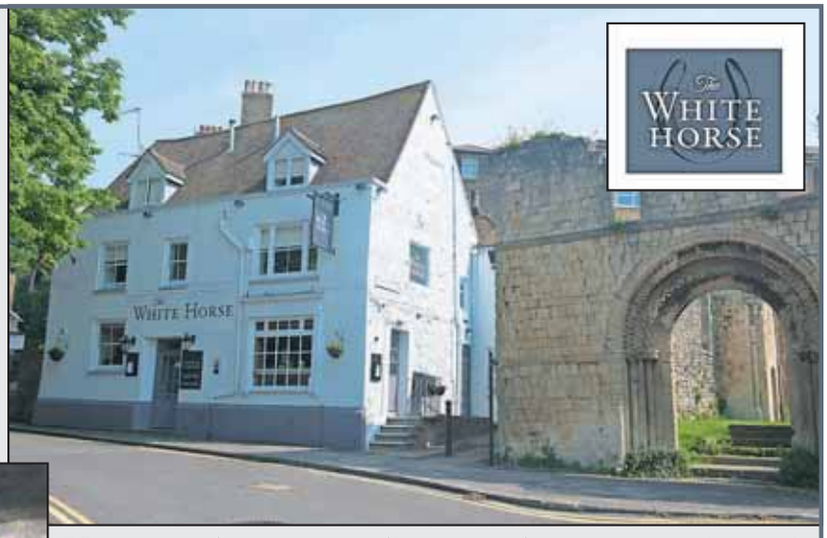
Tickets are available from marlowetheatre.com

Choirs' operatic support

OPERATIC tenor, Thomas Spencer, has a new record out on June 23, and will be performing at Tunbridge Wells' Church of Christ on June 8 alongside the Camden Road Choir, and at St Peter's Church with the Orpheus Choir on July 8.

For more information or tickets visit www.facebook.com/Thomas-Spencer

Sitting in the shadow of Dover Castle lies the Cask Marque accredited White Horse Inn. Dating back to 1365 it is Dover's oldest public house. Today you will find them serving up home cooked food using local suppliers and a ready supply of real ales lagers wines and spirits. The White Horse is not just a traditional pub with an open fire & roof beams though. The main bar decor has a pleasingly eccentric twist whereby successful channel swimmers have come in to sign the walls as a record of their success.



Hours can be spent reading over the names & times. A hidden terrace garden sits to the rear with the spectacular backdrop to the ruins of St James Church which overlooks this sun trap garden. The perfect place to sip one of their extensive range of extravagant gins. Trip Advisor recommendations ensure a continued stream of hungry & thirsty visitors to enjoy this historic grade 2 listed public house.

The White Horse Inn, St James Street, Castle Hill Road, Dover CT16 1QD • 01304 213066

Charitable keeping fit

RUNNERS interested in keeping fit, and helping the community, are being invited to join the GoodGym runs in Bromley, which meet on Tuesdays.

Visit www.goodgym.org

Budding artists step up

ARTISTS have submitted their entries to the Sir Peter Blake summer art exhibition at Dartford Library, from June 16 to September 15.

Last minute entries, from amateurs and professionals, can be made by visiting www.dartford.gov.uk/by=category/leisure-and-culture2/gallery

Pollution schools project

CANTERBURY School of Visual Arts and Turner Contemporary, Margate will team up for a project about marine pollution for school children on June 15.

To register email jscott@turnercontemporary.org

Swedish folk visits Kent

FOLK music duo, Daniel and Emma Reid, will be heading to Maidstone's Bower House on June 23.

The Sweden-based duo, with Emma on violin and Daniel on sax, perform self-penned tunes and traditional folk.

For tickets call 07585662395.

Canterbury paint town pink for Pride parade

By Emily King
emily.king@archant.co.uk

CANTERBURY is getting ready to host its second Pride parade, a celebration of identity led by the LGBT+ community and supporters.

Canterbury Pride, taking place on June 10, will see appearences from Netflix series RuPaul's Drag Race stars Courtney Act and William at Glitterbomb nightclub, as well as a parade, and street entertainment such as live music, market and food stalls.

Last year's even attracted over 3,500 visitors and this year organisers have stated they're expecting 6,000.

Pride in Canterbury is part of the UK Pride Organisers Network, which was established in 2016 to bring together organisers of LGBT+ events. Pride takes place in major cities, not just in the UK but all over the world.

Jon Flitter-Harding, director of Dodgems and Floss, who are sponsoring the event, said: "Our intention has always been to make the event appealing for families and people of any gender, it's not exclusive to the gay community. We took this into account when creating the branding, employing a wide palette of tones - colours but not intimidating.

"In the same way that anyone can support International Women's Day without being a woman, or attend a local food festival without being a chef, you don't have to be LGBT+ to attend Pride."

Dodgems and Floss, a Canterbury-based collaborative design studio, has been branding Pride, from its web design to marketing of the event and recruiting sponsors.

The event kicks off at 11.30am with the parade departing from the Marlowe Theatre, and leading down the high street towards Dane John Gardens.

For more information on Pride Canterbury visit www.canterburypride.co.uk

If unable to make the Canterbury parade, you can find out other location via pinkuk.com

POPULAR: Supporters lined Canterbury's streets last year

FUNNY: Even a dog joined the celebrations

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'Cars always my hobby' says baker Hollywood

Kent's Bake Off star, Paul Hollywood, swaps buns for cars as his new show begins on BBC

HE might be known for his bread and buns but away from the oven, Paul Hollywood's a petrolhead and loves nothing more than racing cars.

"Baking is my career, it's what I am. The whole presenter thing is an accident. I'm a baker by trade but my hobby was always cars," says The Great British Bake Off judge.

He's been passionate about motors "for as long as I can remember.

"My dad used to have several cars growing up - nothing particularly special, but I just loved cars," declares Hollywood, who shared his enthusiasm for motors on BBC programmes Racing Legends and Licence To Thrill: Paul Hollywood Meets Aston Martin in 2015.

The same year he represented the racing team Beechdean Aston Martin in the British GT Championship.

"When I was about 13, I fell in love with the TR7. Don't ask me why, I just did. It was this chocolate one with chequered seats in a garage down the road from where we grew up in the Wirral," he recalls in his familiar Liverpool twang.

"I used to go and watch this car every night and go and look at it because I just loved it."

No wonder he describes his latest show, Paul Hollywood's Big Continental Road Trip,as "a dream job for me".

In the three-part series, Hollywood travels to Germany, France and Italy,

PASSIONATE: Hollywood says he glad his show isn't like Top Gear

endeavouring to understand more about each country through its love of cars.

"It didn't feel like work," he says. "The travel was just amazing we went to some really beautiful places. I thought, 'This is magic, it really is magic'."

The series arrives after Jeremy Clarkson, James May and Richard Hammond's The Grand Tour debut on Amazon and a second series of the revamped Top Gear, with Matt Le Blanc promoted to hosting duties following the departure of Chris Evans.

Hollywood insists he's not disappointed he wasn't part of the new Top Gear line-up.

"This programme was already in the making so it was difficult for me to get involved anyway. So, no, that was never a choice.

"I would rather do something different anyway, so I was happy carrying on with the Continental Road Trip."

Besides, he's keeping busy with The Great British Bake Off, having decided to move with the programme to Channel 4, despite former BBC colleagues Mary Berry, Sue Perkins and Mel Giedroyc standing down.

He's earned a reputation for being tough in the Bake Off tent, but that's something he attributes to the programme-makers.

"It's called editing," he laughs.

:: Paul Hollywood's Big Continental Road Trip is on Sundays, or available on BBC iPlayer.

Striped Pjs reimagined

NORTHERN Ballet has reimagined John Boyne's bestselling novel The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas in a new production which is coming to Bromley's Churchill Theatre on July 16 and 17.

Telling the story of an unlikely friendship through the disturbing events of the Second World War, it sees a child's innocent curiosity lead to a devastating conclusion.

For tickets visit churchilltheatre.co.uk

A show, glorious show

HIT musical Oliver, is coming to Margate's Winter Gardens from July 27-29.

Bringing to life the Charles Dickens' classic, with its story of the orphaned boy's tale, Oliver takes the audience through Victorian London struggles.

The cast includes BBC1's Michael McIntyre Show's comedian Shannon Taiwo.

Visit margatewintergardens.co.uk

Praise for youth choirs

AROUND 40 young people from Beckenham participated in the first performance of a new children's opera.

The Beckenham Junior Choir and Beckenham Youth Voices performed One of Our Brothers is a Lion, by british composer James Olsen, at the Beckenham Methodist Church to an audience of over 200 people.

Director John Webber, said: ''I am immensley proud of what the singers have achieved.''

Dockyard pirate ship

CHATHAM Dockyard are still inviting young 'maties' aboard their pirate ship until June 4.

Children can climb on-board the HMS Gannet to hunt for treasure and join storytelling sessions.

The pirate ship will be moored next to a 'cove' complete with beach, palm trees and a giant deck chair.

For tickets visit www.thedockyard.co.uk

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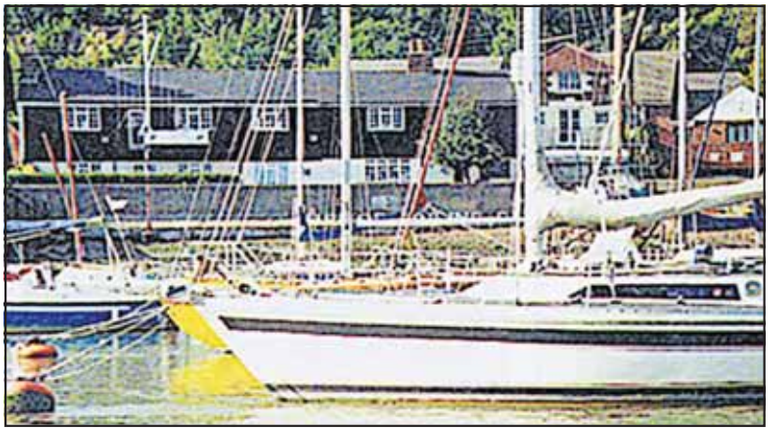

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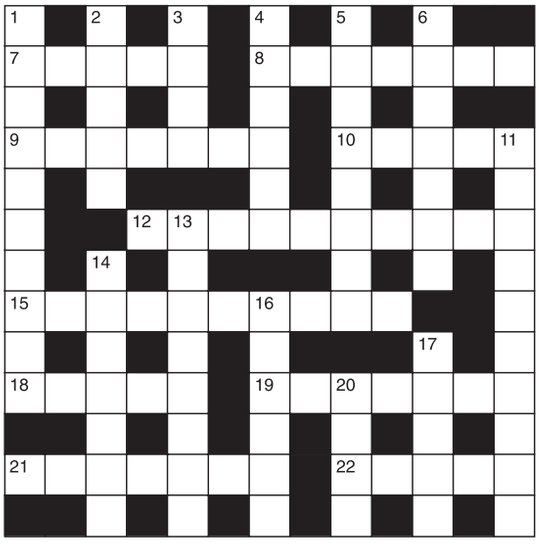

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Across

7. Wanderer (5)
8. Distended (7)
9. Utter (7)
10. Call (5)
12. Twist (10)
15. Suppliant (10)
18. Ward off (5)
19. Desolate (7)
21. Treachery (7)
22. Stupid (5)

Down

1. Intruder (10)
2. Hit (5)
3. Axe (4)
4. Agree (6)
5. Opposite (8)
6. Stretchable (7)
11. Softness (10)
13. Excel (8)
14. Bung (7)
16. Insult (6)
17. Faithful (5)
20. Boulder (4)

Cryptic

Across

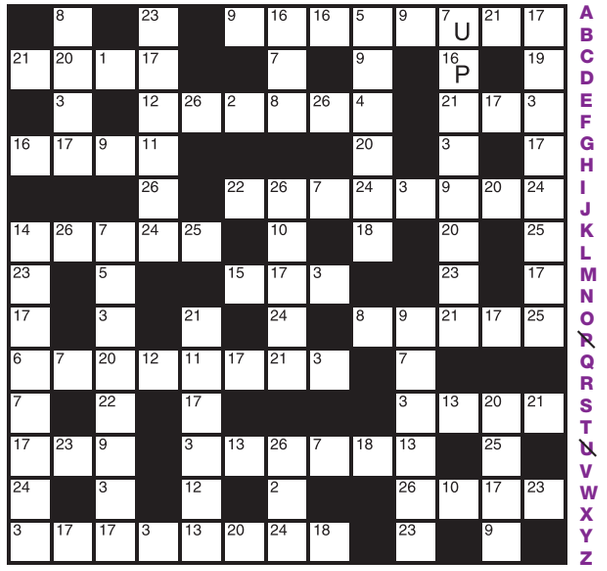
7. There's nothing in the trick to cause excitement (5)
8. Sending an invoice for mention on poster? (7)
9. Even run to deprive of courage (7)
10. Men capable of taking a thousand drinks (5)
12. Sort pen out with inauspicious result (10)
15. Statement describing fast train with only one on (10)
18. Speedy writer? (5)
19. Delight that no-one takes the story as completely the reverse (7)
21. Enraged unfortunately - more than annoyed (7)
22. Minister lost his head when fire raising! (5)

Down

1. Having no reason for being without land (10)
2. Poet having injuries from fire (5)
3. Youth leader catches listener in time (4)
4. Take exception to article (6)
5. Bird in circle of fire? (8)
6. Does he leave people dead miserable? (7)
11. Supportive of using wicked gun - it's a sin! (10)
13. Take the corner too sharply and go right over (8)
14. Resilient sources of water? (7)
16. Stable, yet sad (6)
17. The original tree on the street (5)
20. A container partly open (4)

CODEWORD

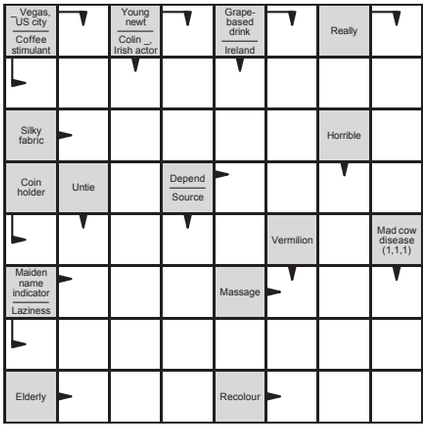
This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter.
For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.



A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
						U						
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
		P										

Arrowword



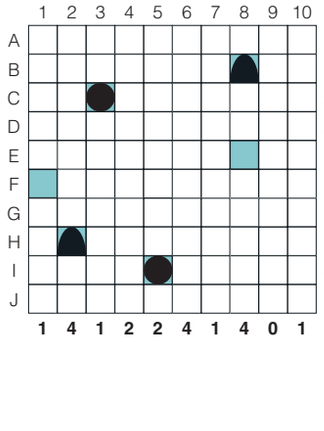
Enter your answers in the direction indicated by the arrows.

Battleships

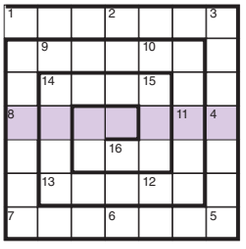
Find where ships shown below are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some of the squares have been filled to start you off.

THE FLEET

1 x Battleship
2 x Cruiser
3 x Destroyer
4 x Submarine



Word Spiral



Starting from 1, fill in the grid clockwise with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next to reveal the key word in the shaded boxes.

1. Rugby forward
2. Entreaty
3. Opera song
4. Dull pain
5. Therefore
6. Leave out
7. Body powder
8. Stout stick
9. Boast
10. Snatch
11. Setback
12. Vagary
13. Frame of mind
14. Neatly skilful
15. Labour
16. Cooking fat

Keyword clue: An Argentinian city

SUDOKU

Hard

	2		6			4		
	1	3	7					
				3				
9				8		6		
	5		4		2		9	
		7		9				8
				1				
	4				8	2	5	
		9			6		7	

Easy

6		1		4		3		
	8			1	3			2
9			5		6		4	
		7			1		5	
8	9			6	7		2	3
	4		8			9		
	3		6		8		1	
2			3				9	7
		6		2		8		5

Solutions

Arrowword

Battleships

Double Crossword

Cryptic
Across: 7 Rouse; 8 Billing; 9 Unnerve; 10 Wales; 12 Portentous; 15 Expression; 18 Swift; 19 Elation; 21 Angered; 22 Arson.
Down: 1 Groundless; 2 Burns; 3 Year; 4 Object; 5 Flaming; 6 Killjoy; 11 Sustaining; 13 Overturn; 14 Springs; 16 Steady; 17 First; 20 Ajar.

Quick
Across: 7 Nomad; 8 Swollen; 9 Extreme; 10 Visit; 12 Contortion; 15 Petitioner; 18 Repel; 19 Forlorn; 21 Treason; 22 Crass.
Down: 1 Interloper; 2 Smile; 3 Adze; 4 Assent; 5 Converse; 6 Elastic; 11 Tenderness; 13 Outclass; 14 Stopper; 16 Offend; 17 Loyal; 20 Rock.

Codeword
1=Z, 2=W, 3=T, 4=Y, 5=L, 6=O, 7=U, 8=B, 9=A, 10=V, 11=K, 12=C, 13=H, 14=F, 15=J, 16=P, 17=E, 18=G, 19=X, 20=I, 21=S, 22=M, 23=R, 24=N, 25=D, 26=O

Word Spiral
1 Prop; 2 Plea; 3 Aria; 4 Ache; 5 Ergo; 6 Omit; 7 Talc; 8 Club; 9 Brag; 10 Grab; 11 Blow; 12 Whim; 13 Mood; 14 Deft; 15 Toil; 16 Lard.
Keyword: Cordoba

Sudoku - Easy

6	5	1	7	4	2	3	8	9
7	8	4	9	1	3	5	6	2
9	2	3	5	8	6	7	4	1
3	6	7	2	9	1	4	5	8
8	9	5	4	6	7	1	2	3
1	4	2	8	3	5	9	7	6
5	3	9	6	7	8	2	1	4
2	1	8	3	5	4	6	9	7
4	7	6	1	2	9	8	3	5

Sudoku - Hard

7	2	8	6	5	9	4	3	1
6	1	3	7	2	4	9	8	5
4	9	5	8	3	1	7	2	6
9	3	4	5	8	7	6	1	2
8	5	1	4	6	2	3	9	7
2	6	7	1	9	5	8	4	3
3	7	2	9	1	5	8	6	4
1	4	6	3	7	8	2	5	9
5	8	9	2	4	6	1	7	3

Czech mate!

Mike Pickup finds out what else the Czech Republic has to offer besides Prague

There's much more to the Czech Republic than its bustling capital and I wanted to see what else the country had to offer.

After an overnight in Prague, the busy highways soon gave way to deserted country roads. My first destination was Chateau Jemniste. Designed by Santini it's one of many buildings in the Baroque style that has given the country a rich cultural heritage. Jemniste boasts a formal garden, lovely rooms with painted walls and ceilings, and a fine chapel. There are a couple of self-contained suites where visitors can stay and a great restaurant and tea room.

Later I visited Kutna Hora's Italian Court was where locally-mined silver was turned into coins from the early 1300s to 1740. The nearby tiny chocolate museum contains many items from bygone days and treats visitors to samples of the chocolate it makes. Go prepared for chocolate heaven.

The following morning I visited the Kladruby nad Labem stud which dates back to the mid 14th century. It's home to the Kladruber Old White, a cousin of the Lippizaner horses used in the Spanish Riding School in Vienna. Two carriages pulled by these lovely animals took a group of us on a carriage drive. We clip-clopped through the village and out into the countryside for exhilarating lungs-full of fresh air.

After lunch I moved on to Zdar nad Sázavou, and the nearby hilltop ten-pointed star shaped structure surrounding the five-pointed Pilgrimage Church of St. John of Nepomuk at Zelena Hora. I visited a nearby monastery with its small brewery and sampled some excellent light and dark beers. The brewery sells bottles of beer to local hotels and restaurants.

The castle has now been restored to the Kinsky family and I was shown round by the Count. It's now home to a school where his wife teaches special needs children, and the impressive Baroque tower includes three hotel bedrooms. The castle's halls are used for concerts, weddings and business events and is very much part of the community.

My final day was spent in Telc. This town of 5,500 inhabitants is noted for its pastel painted buildings surrounding the town square. Its Chateau contains numerous attractive paintings, furniture and an impressive armoury. I saw a demonstration of Baroque-style dancing by Alla Danza Brno and the audience was then invited to participate.

Then it was time to head back to Prague and the flight home, with memories of just how different the rest of the Czech Republic is from its tourist-thronged capital.

Above: Colourful houses in Telc; left, the pilgrimage Church of St John of Nepomuk.
Pictures: MIKE PICKUP

Find out more...

Getting around

For visitor information and advice go to www.czechtourism.com You can travel around by hire car or use the excellent public transport network. For more information on public transport go to www.idos.cz Holiday Extras offers trusted parking services at all major UK airports.

To book UK Airport Meet and Greet parking visit www.holidayextras.com or call 0800 1313 777

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Lack of animal care in election

I HAVE been extremely disappointed with all the political parties in the run up to the general election.

Except for the newish, London-based Animal Welfare Party, not one of the other parties has given a mention to the appalling cruelty to animals allowed by law.

This is despite the fact that MPs receive more mail on animal welfare than any other subject.

At the time of the general elections of 1987 and 1997, animal rights were top of the political agenda. Labour produced a comprehensive, eye-catching, booklet entitled New Labour, New Life for Animals, in which they pledged to eradicate areas of animal cruelty and improve welfare.

I am, therefore, very sad that Jeremy Corbyn, who is vegetarian, anti-hunt and anti-badger cull, has chosen to remain silent on this issue in his numerous television interviews. Likewise, the Green Party.

However, Theresa May has mentioned animals by promising a free vote in Parliament to kill our wildlife, ie. repeal the 2004 Anti Hunt Act if the Conservatives are returned to power.

Not just foxes, but rabbits, hare and deer would be chased for hours, then ripped to pieces by packs of hounds.

Her constant rhetoric is Brexit means Brexit. Therefore, the hunt ban should remain the hunt ban.

The law has been passed and should be strengthened, not reversed.

It seems incredulous a 21st century prime minster wants a return to this bloodthirsty activity. Perhaps Mrs May would also like bear baiting and cock fighting to be legal again?

Animals cannot speak for themselves. We have to use our vote to be their voice.

Some people may think that there are more important matters yet the great Mahatma Gandhi is quoted as saying: "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."

Mrs May and politicians, please note.

Vivien Clifford,
Deal

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Stack 'solution' will be a white elephant

KENT county councillor Matthew Balfour [cabinet member for planning, highways, transport and waste] is whinging on about the lack of progress towards a lorry park to help ease the threat of Operation Stack [Kos, last week].

Progress has been delayed by the actions of his own party, the Conservatives, never a party keen on openness and transparency, and afraid that evidence and debate may interfere with Mother Theresa's coronation.

Heaven forbid that factual evidence should emerge whilst electioneering is in progress.

Councillor Balfour is keen for £250 million to be spent on a political white elephant yet his own department is unable to repair pot holes throughout Kent which is gaining the distinction of having the worst road surfaces in England.

Councillor Balfour's insistence to push on at a pace with this unnecessary infrastructure seems to indicate that he is oblivious to the environmental impact of this ill conceived monstrosity on the countryside.

With no proper planning process having taken place, those people whose homes and livelihoods are to be affected need at least to have their concerns given an airing in public.

Pete Trow
by email

Please note, as of last week, we moved offices, so when writing into us, please ensure you note our new address.
All future correspondence needs to be addressed to:
Letters Page
Kent on Sunday
Room G46
The Panorama
130 Park Street
Ashford
Kent
TN24 8EU
Or email us at editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

We can't ignore global poverty

DURING this current general election campaign, I am concerned with who will represent Tonbridge and Malling in the next parliament.

There are many important local and national issues at stake.

As a supporter of Catholic aid agency Cafod, I hope that candidates of all parties in Tonbridge and Malling will consider global issues too, and commit to build on Britain's proud record in looking outwards and working with others to tackle poverty, inequality and climate change.

We live in an interconnected world.

To say we can't help people at home if we help them abroad is to present a false choice.

We are big enough to do both: it is who we are and what we stand for.

Nigel Green,
Tonbridge

More similar on local issues

AT A local hustings in Lympne Village Hall, organised by the Sellindge & District Residents Association, six candidates turned up to face questioning from a crowed of mixed political allegiance residents.

Our chairman, Bob Edden, focused on local issues with a spattering of national matters being raised. There can be no doubt that when it comes to issues like Brexit, the foreign aid budget, immigration, defence and the NHS, there are marked differences which would or could determine the way we vote, but when it comes to local issues, one would be hard pushed to know who to vote for.

Questions were put to each and every candidate on issues such as Otterpool, the lorry park, Prince's Parade, local surgeries and lack of doctors, housing and the performance of our local district council were also discussed.

It's abundantly clear that if a coalition of all the candidates in attendance and other like minded people filled the halls of the Civic Centre we wouldn't be faced with the threat of a commuter town of 12,000 houses, the building of executive type houses on Prince's Parade and real opposition to the lorry park, which was purely a knee jerk reaction to the unprecedented 2015 Operation Stack,

As co chairman of our association, I often receive emails from floating voters on why they should vote for a certain candidate. My response is to look at the candidate, contact the candidate, meet the candidate. Don't vote a certain way because your family have always voted for a certain party. If the candidate is prepared to email, telephone or write to you, that's a start. If, in this case of as general election, you broadly agree with national issues that are important to you, that should be considered. If you agree with the candidates' position on local issues, you're home and dry.

Les Barratt,
Sellindge & District Residents' Assocation

Cash must be spent on health

BY coincidence, on the day of the Manchester bomb I had been to my nearest medical centre to register with a doctor.

I was handed a letter. It explained that in Ramsgate each doctor has a list of 3,000 patients, as opposed to a national average of 1,850. They can only take on new patients when others leave.

Things are equally bad in relation to the provision of hospitals in east Kent. If there were a major incident at Canterbury Cathedral or Dover Castle, or indeed a major railway accident, our emergency services could not cope adequately.

Whatever the current PM says, the money is there. The wealth of the richest 1,000 people in Britain increased by £80 billion in the last year. That money could and must be redistributed to meet the urgent needs of ordinary people, including health provision.

Frederic Stansfield,
Ramsgate

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

images of kent

Sound mirrors on Romney Marsh

by **Andy Coleman**

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We Love the 60s Seaside Christmas Party

PONTINS

Pontins Pakefield, Suffolk Coast

10 November, 2017 • Quote: CP11-1-KOS

3 nights half board PLUS £139pp

Join us at Pontins Pakefield, on the Suffolk coast, for an early taste of Christmas - for over 40s only - as we rock the weekend away to the sounds of the 60s. Our brilliant entertainment programmes feature top 60s bands and tribute acts including Marty Wilde and the Wildcats, Union Gap UK, The New Honeycombs, Dave Grant of Paper Lace and The Beatle (John Lennon tribute). Enjoy non-stop entertainment from Friday evening to Sunday evening and half-price drinks at this rockin' party weekend.

INCLUDED: Half Price bar drinks - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers - lunch times and evenings from Friday night to Sunday night • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights en-suite chalet - club upgrade available • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Free parking

Suffolk 60s Seaside Party

WARNER LEISURE HOTELS

Warner Corton, Suffolk Coast

23 February, 2018 • Quote: CO2-KOS

3 nights half board PLUS from £259pp

The beautiful Suffolk coast is the location for Corton Coastal Village which has all the easy atmosphere of a holiday home, and the creature comforts Warner is famous for. Built on a chalet theme, the rooms have clapboard design, with fresh pastel interiors, and many have terraces overlooking the sea. Our 60s Sounds party weekend - for over 40s only - is packed with entertainment. We've lined up a brilliant showbill featuring 60s bands Union Gap UK, the New Honeycombs and Roy Carter (ex-Drifters & Foundations). With non-stop entertainment from Friday evening to Sunday evening and free drinks every night, this is going to be a party weekend to remember.

INCLUDED: Free drinks 6pm to midnight every night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & pumped mixers • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights en-suite chalet - upgrades available • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Free parking

Mamma Mia & Super 70s Christmas Party

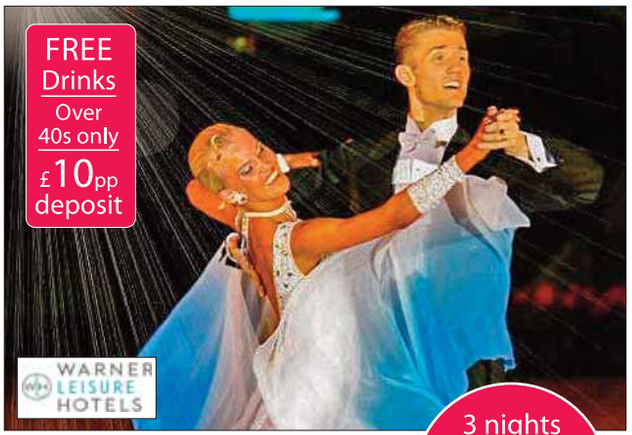
Warner Norton Grange, Isle of Wight

Friday 1 December, 2017 • Quote CN12-KOS

3 nights half board PLUS from £259pp

Abba and the 70s take centre stage on our over 40s Christmas Party at Warner's Norton Grange resort with Abba's Angels, a screening of Mamma Mia the movie, tributes to The Four Seasons, The Bee Gees and more. Enjoy good food, comfortable en-suite accommodation, great entertainment and Free drinks every night with the GN Team on hand to ensure a fun-filled festive atmosphere.

INCLUDED: Free drinks from 6pm to midnight every night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & pumped mixers • 3 dinners and 3 breakfasts • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights en-suite chalet - upgrades available • Free car ferry crossing • Free parking



Isle of Wight Come Dancing 60s Party

Warner Bembridge Coast

5 January, 2018 • Quote: BE1-2-KOS

3 nights half board PLUS from £289pp

Fans of ballroom and latin dancing will love our popular Come Dancing Party, running alongside the 60s music themed Carry on New Year Party at Warner Bembridge on the Isle of Wight. Hosted by World Champion dancers Warren & Kristi Boyce, this party break features up to 8 hours dance tuition and social dancing, a Gala Ball, a huge dance floor with reserved tables and seating exclusively for dancers. You can also enjoy live entertainment in the show lounge featuring Union Gap, The Cufflinks & Vicki Lambert as 60s Divas and free drinks every evening.

INCLUDED: Free drinks from 6pm to midnight every night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & pumped mixers • Up to 8 hours dance tuition and social dancing • Gala Ball • Reserved tables and seating • Live nightly entertainment • 3 nights en-suite chalet - upgrades available • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Free car ferry crossing • Free parking

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FRESH: Dacia Sandero and Logan MCV Stepways and Duster are now available in new range-topping SE Summit versions. Pictures: Dacia

SE Summit range from Dacia is a ray of sunshine

WITH warm weather well and truly here and people enjoying life outdoors, Dacia's new special edition range – SE Summit – is a ray of sunshine.

Inspired by the great outdoors, and based on the range-topping trims levels of the Duster sport utility vehicles and rugged new Sandero Stepway and New Logan MCV Stepway, the distinctive and affordable Summit Special Editions are available this month, priced from £10,995.

The range brings an exclusive and special look to the range and provides extra equipment over the existing top-of-range versions.

The SE Summit Stepways are powered by 90hp 1.5-litre and 0.9-litre turbo petrol engines.

The Duster uses 125hp 1.2-litre turbo petrol and 110hp 1.5-litre turbo diesels, the latter also offered in automatic guise, with front and four-wheel drive.

SE Summit versions of the New Sandero Stepway and New Logan MCV Stepway stand out in an exclusive new metallic colour - Nordic grey.

The Sandero Stepway Summit Special Edition is also available in Magma Orange.

These new colours are complemented by 16in dark metal flex-wheels.

Inside, the Summit Special Editions boast unique upholstery with the seats having burnt orange piping and top-stitching, plus the 'Stepway' logo embroidered into the fabric in the same colour.

The same burnt orange detailing is throughout the cabin, including on the centre console cover and air vent surrounds.

SE Summit Stepways are based on Lauréate trim, and add a rear parking camera and a front central armrest to the equipment list which already includes air conditioning, Media Nav Evolution multimedia system with satellite navigation, DAB radio and Bluetooth connectivity, rear parking sensors, cruise control and speed limiter.

KENT LIFE

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IS 300h prices start from £28,995. Model shown is IS 300h SPORT £31,495, excludes optional metallic paint at £610.
*2.9% APR Representative, £1,500 Finance Deposit Allowance and £1,500 Centre contribution. 24-42 months only on Lexus Connect (PCP), up to 35% deposit and Guaranteed Future Value/Optional Final Payment. IS new retail sales. Ordered and proposed for finance between 1 April 2017 and 30 June 2017, registered and financed by 30 September 2017 through Lexus Financial Services. Excess mileage charges apply. Other finance offers available but cannot be used in conjunction with this offer. Participating Lexus Centres. Lexus Centres are independent of Lexus Financial Services. Terms and conditions apply. Indemnities may be required. Finance subject to status to over 18s only. Lexus Financial Services is a trading name of Toyota Financial Services (UK) PLC. Registered Office: Great Burgh, Burgh Heath, Epsom, KT18 5UZ. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. ^3 Years Free Servicing entitles the owner to first 3 Manufacturer scheduled servicing in first 3 years or 30,000 miles of ownership, whichever comes soonest when purchased on a Lexus Connect PCP contract before 30 April 2017. Services must be taken at supplying Lexus Centre.

The MPG figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results. They are provided for comparability purposes, and may not reflect actual driving experience. IS 300h SPORT fuel consumption and CO2 figures: urban 60.1 mpg (4.7 l/100km), extra-urban 58.9 mpg (4.8 l/100km), combined 61.4 mpg (4.6 l/100km), 107g/km CO_2 (20% BIK).

LEXUS
EXPERIENCE AMAZING

Big value load-lugger in it for long haul

SsangYong's stretched Tivoli boosts boot space so this new XLV version really has got loads going for it, according to our motoring editor Andy Russell

YOU can't have too much of a good thing, so SsangYong has built on the Tivoli crossover's appeal with a 'stretched' version.

The XLV is endowed with a huge boot and family-friendly load capacity at a price that will be seen as attractive value.

The Tivoli is a well-proportioned little crossover but the longer XLV version looks a bit dumpy by comparison but it's a price many people will happily pay and being boxy certainly pays off when it comes to practicality and versatility.

Unlike the shorter Tivoli there's no 1.6-litre petrol unit, only a 1.6-litre turbo diesel with the choice of front and four-wheel drive, manual and automatic gearboxes.

The diesel proves deceptively brisk, offering up to 50mpg overall in mixed driving

The comfortable suspension soaks up rough surfaces effectively but still corners competently while steering has comfort, normal and sport settings to alter its weight.

If needed, the XLV can be locked in four-wheel drive to split power between the front and back axles.

Taller passengers will be happy in the back with plenty of leg and headroom on reclining split back seats.

This more spacious load-lugger has a vast twin-level boot. Remove the sill-level luggage board and you've got a boxy 720-litre loadbay that will take four decent-sized suitcases. With the board in place, there's still 574 litres – a match for most mid-size estate cars – and it sits flush with the rear seat backs folded down – ideal for sliding bulky and heavy cargo in and out.

Be warned though, the optional space saver spare wheel sits on the floor so you can't make use of the boot's full depth.

The driving seat offers a stylish, but unfussy, fascia with accessible dials and a high-level touch screen, but glovebox space is lacking.

The Tivoli XLV comes as standard with leather upholstery, heated front seats, keyless entry and ignition, automatic headlights and wipers, self-dimming driver's mirror, cruise control, 18in alloy wheels, front and rear sensors, rear view camera, a SatNav and more.

Don't let the badge put you off, the Tivoli XLV is full of space and comforts, all for a decent price.

Car

Price: **from £19,200**

Engine tested: **1,597cc, 115PS, four-cylinder turbo diesel**

Performance: **0-62mph 12 seconds; top speed 106mph**

MPG: **Urban 52.3; extra urban 61.4; combined 57.6**

CO2 emissions: **127g/km**

Warranty: **Five years, unlimited mileage**

Will it fit in the garage?: **L 4,440mm; W (including door mirrors) 1,798mm; H 1,635mm**

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Fuel consumption figures in mpg. Urban 28.8 – 55.3. Extra Urban 42.8 – 72.4. Combined 35.3 – 65.7. CO2 emissions in g/km: 194 – 113. Models featured are a Korando 2.2 ELX at £21,750, a Rexton 2.2 EX at £25,995, a Tivoli ELX at £17,000 and a ELX Diesel Auto 4x4 at £21,700, all including optional metallic paint priced at £500. *Korando 2.2 SE, Rexton 2.2 SE. Turismo 2.2 SE and Tivoli SE all including VAT, delivery charge, Road Fund Licence & first registration charge. Prices and offers are correct at the time of going to print, but may be modified or changed at any time. Special offers available on 16 model year only and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offers. 3 years free servicing available on 16 model year Korando and Rexton only and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offers. 3 years or 37,500 miles. 16MY vehicles only. Vehicles must be orderedand registered by 30th June 2017. 62540

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Official fuel consumption for the ŠKODA Kodiaq range in mpg (litres/100km): Urban 31.0 (9.1) to 48.7 (5.8); Extra Urban 44.1 (6.4) to 61.4 (4.6); Combined 38.2 (7.4) to 56.5 (5.0). CO_2 emissions for the ŠKODA Kodiaq range are 170 to 131 g/km. Standard EU test figures are for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

Your guide to... **Motability**

Motability 'road to freedom' celebrating 40th anniversary

MOTABILITY, the charity that has provided "a road to freedom" for millions of disabled people and their families, is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year.

The Queen, the chief patron of Motability since its inception, hosted a ceremony at Windsor Castle to celebrate the milestone.

Established in 1977 by Lord Sterling and the late Lord Goodman, the Motability Scheme has provided 4.5 million vehicles to date. The scheme has helped millions of disabled people maintain their ability to get to work or college, attend a medical appointment, meet up with friends and enjoy the freedom and independence that so many people take for granted.

The Queen presented five disabled people and their families with the keys to their new vehicles in front of 400 guests. These were:

Paul Barrett, a Royal Marine veteran who sustained life-changing injuries due to an improvised explosive device (IED) while serving on operations in Afghanistan. He received the keys to his automatic Nissan X-Trail, his third vehicle on the Scheme. It is fitted with a twin flip folding left foot accelerator and a quick release steering wheel aid.

Eckveer Ramburn, aged 11, whose new wheelchair-accessible vehicle, a Ford Tourneo, means he can now travel safely in his wheelchair to be taken to school and after-school clubs. This is his second vehicle on the scheme and is fitted with a ramp and tie-down points so that his parents do not have to lift him into it, making travelling so much easier for the family.

Olivia, a student with autism, whose car will allow her to get to college where she studies animal care, maths and English. Her Vauxhall Adam is also her first on the scheme and she is learning to drive with lessons funded by a Motability grant.

Edward Todino, a disability advisor at Kingston University, whose adapted 'drive-from-wheelchair' vehicle, a TBC Sprinter and his first car on the scheme, will allow him to continue to be mobile and remain independent.

Allan Carter, 72 and a customer since 1978, contracted polio aged 11. His new vehicle, an automatic SEAT Alhambra, has been fitted with an electric transfer plate and wheelchair hoist. This will be his 13th car on the scheme. When he first learned to drive, he used a blue 'invalid trike' but, like many disabled drivers, found it to be anti-social as it could not carry passengers, and difficult to handle on the roads.

The Queen also viewed the special features and adaptations of the Motability Scheme vehicles which demonstrated the significant technological advances made over the last 40 years to allow those with even the most severe disabilities remain mobile and independent.

Lord Sterling, the Chairman of Motability, said: "The unique partnership which makes up the Motability Scheme is sustained by many individuals who show such wonderful empathy in their efforts, such as those working in motor dealerships up and down the country, patrolmen providing roadside assistance to those who need it, and, of course, all those in the scheme's motor manufacturers, insurers, conversion and adaptation companies, and the staff of Motability and Motability Operations."

THE QUEEN, chief patron of Motability, at the charity's 40th anniversary ceremony. Picture: MOTABILITY

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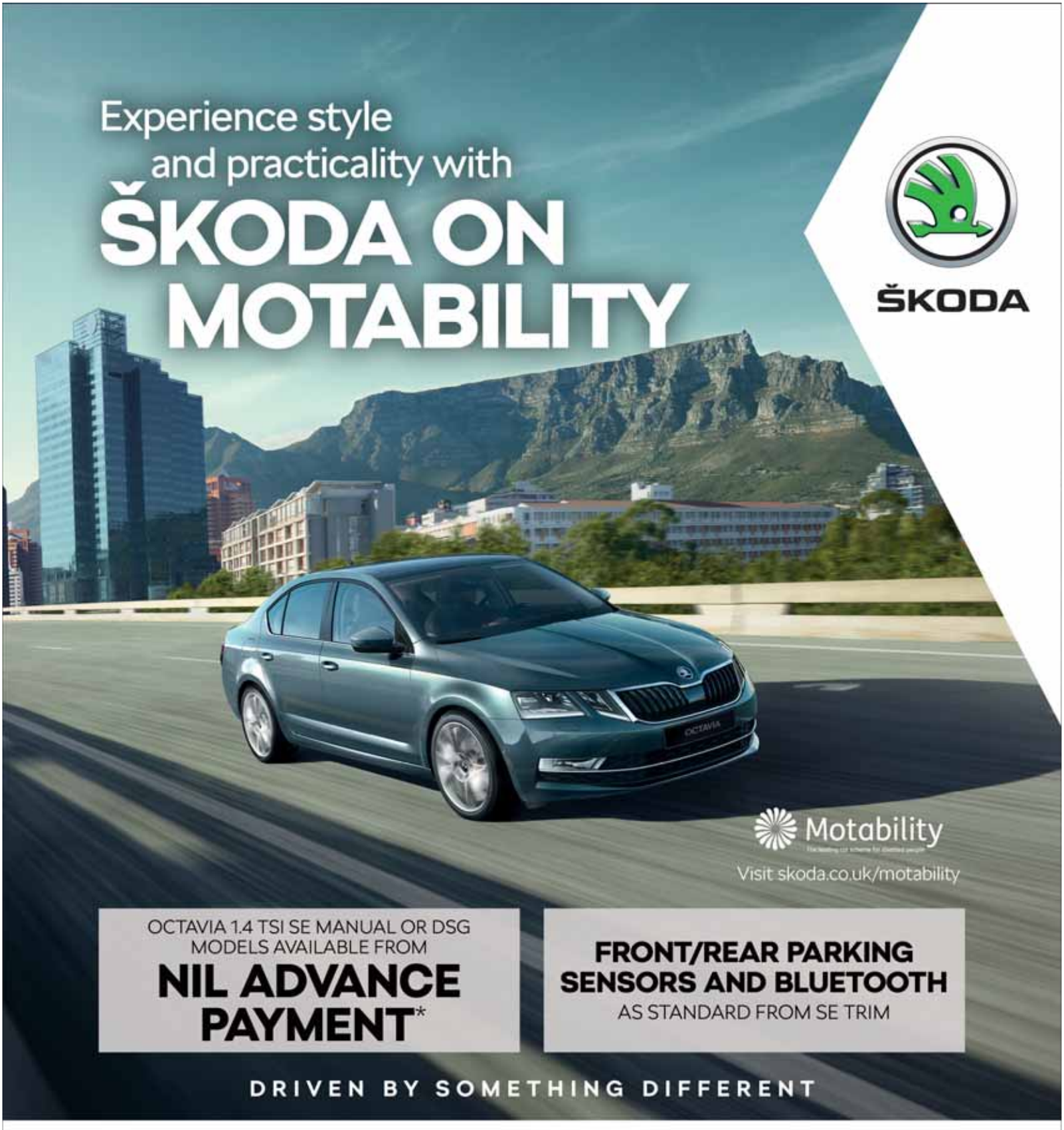
Motability

*2017 C-HR Icon 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual at £595 Advance Payment. Model shown is C-HR Dynamic 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual at £1,795 Advance Payment, AYGO x-press 5 door 1.0 VVT-i x-shift at Nil Advance Payment, Auris Icon 5 door 1.6 D-4D Manual at £95 Advance Payment, Auris Touring Sports Icon 5 door 1.2T VVT-i Manual at £895 Advance Payment and Verso Icon 7-Seat 1.6 V-matic Manual at £295 Advance Payment. Subject to availability. Please note that a total of 60,000 miles over three years are allowed on the Motability Contract Hire Scheme. Offer valid between 1st April and 30th June 2017. Available as part of the Motability Contract Hire Scheme.

C-HR Dynamic 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 38.1 (7.4), Extra Urban 55.4 (5.1), Combined 47.8 (5.9). CO_2 Emissions 135g/km. AYGO x-press 5 door 1.0 VVT-i x-shift. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 56.5 (5.0), Extra Urban 78.5 (3.6), Combined 68.9 (4.1). CO_2 Emissions 95g/km. Auris Icon 5 door 1.6 D-4D Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 55.4 (5.1), Extra Urban 74.3 (3.8), Combined 65.7 (3.8). CO_2 Emissions 110g/km. Auris Touring Sports Icon 5 door 1.2T VVT-i Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 47.9 (5.9), Extra Urban 67.3 (4.2), Combined 58.9 (4.8). CO_2 Emissions 112g/km. Verso Icon 7-Seat 1.6 V-matic Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 53.3 (5.3), Extra Urban 68.9 (4.1), Combined 62.8 (4.5). CO_2 Emissions 119g/km. All mpg and CO_2 figures quoted are sourced from official EU regulated laboratory test results. These are provided to allow comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect your actual driving experience.



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*To qualify for this offer you must be in receipt of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance, War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement, Enhanced Rate Mobility Component of Personal Independence Payment or Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP). Models shown are not UK specification. Prices and specifications are accurate at time of publication. Offers may be varied or withdrawn at any time and are not available in conjunction with any other offer. Participating retailers only. Subject to availability. Valid for applications to Motability from 4 April to 30 June 2017.
Official fuel consumption for the ŠKODA range in mpg (litres/100km): Urban 31.0 (9.1) to 72.4 (3.9); Extra Urban 44.1 (6.4) to 88.3 (3.2); Combined 38.2 (7.4) to 80.7 (3.5). CO_2 emissions for the ŠKODA range are 170 to 90 g/km. Standard EU test figures are for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

Motability 'family' helps Allen live life to full

ALLEN seriously injured in a road traffic accident in 1991 while serving in the Royal Navy during the Gulf War.

He explained: "I suffered a traumatic head injury which left me in hospital for five years. When I woke up shortly after the accident, I couldn't recall being married, the birth of my children or even read, write, walk or talk. It's been a long recovery to where I am today.

"My life changed when I met an assistance dog called Endal. My wife worked with assistance dogs and one day I went to a training class with her. It was there I met Endal – a puppy who was failing his training on medical grounds. Us two rejects found each other and I smiled – for the first time in five years.

"Gradually, with Endal's help, I went from being a recluse to an active person again and slowly, every day, he brought me back to my family. My life had completely turned around, and I wanted to live life to the full, and that's where the Motability Scheme helps."

Allen is one of more than 650,000 disabled people who choose to use their government-funded mobility allowance to lease a car, powered wheelchair or scooter through the Motability Scheme. Allen chose a new Citroen Grand C4 Picasso with insurance, breakdown cover, servicing, maintenance and replacement tyres all included on a three-year lease. Adaptations can also be added to cars, many at no extra cost.

"We got our first car over 20 years ago and it's like joining an exclusive club – a Motability family. The Motability Scheme is there to help you and, knowing that you've got back-up and you're not on your own, if a problem arises, gives you real peace of mind.

ALLEN Parton, pictured with his dog EJ, set up a charity called Hounds for Heroes so his Motability vehicle is invaluable transport. Picture: MOTABILITY

"My Motability Scheme car gives me the freedom and independence I need to for my hectic life!

"Sadly, Endal passed away in 2009, but he gave me so many years of loyal service, even saving my life on one occasion. I set up a charity called Hounds for Heroes to provide specially-trained assistance dogs to injured and disabled Servicemen and women and the civilian emergency services so they can benefit from the trust and teamwork that helped me when I was injured.

"I have to travel around a lot with EJ, my new dog, for fund-raising events and meetings, so my car is invaluable. I couldn't do everything I do without it."

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Finance provided by Renault Finance, PO Box 149, Watford WD17 1FJ. Subject to status. Indemnities may be required. UK residents only (excluding the Channel Islands). Over 18s. Terms and conditions apply. Offers based on 6,000 miles per annum, excess mileage 8p per mile inc VAT. Finance available on selected new vehicles when ordered and registered by 30 June 2017. *An additional £750 contribution towards the purchase price. Retail customers only, on top of all other offers on selected Captur and Mégane models from existing stock only. Offers eligible when ordered and registered between 16 May and 30 June 2017. †Certain accessory packs will not be compatible with all Captur trim levels; speak to your dealer for details. Subject to availability. Participating dealers only. Terms & conditions apply: see renault.co.uk/offers. Captur shown with optional metallic paint, and painted roof at an extra £894. All-New Mégane Hatch shown with optional metallic paint, available at £545.

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Book a test drive

Charity's simple route to trouble-free motoring

THE Motability Scheme currently provides more than 600,000 disabled people and their families with affordable, convenient, trouble-free motoring, enabling them to exchange their mobility allowance to lease a new car, powered wheelchair or scooter.

THE NEW NISSAN QASHQA: There are more than 4,000 models from major manufacturers to choose from on the Motability Scheme.

Who can apply?

Anyone who receives one of the following mobility benefits and has at least 12 months award length remaining when they apply, can use it to pay for their lease:

- Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance.
- Enhanced Rate Mobility Component of Personal Independence Payment.
- War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement.
- Armed Forces Independence Payment.
- A parent or carer can apply on behalf of a child, aged three or older, and non-drivers can still apply, nominating up to two people to drive for them.

How does it work?

Customers simply transfer their mobility allowance to lease a suitable vehicle which includes insurance, tyre and windscreen replacement, servicing, breakdown cover and road tax.

Customers can choose a brand new car from a selection of more than 4,000 models, from the major manufacturers. A similar scheme is available for powered wheelchairs

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PEUGEOT RECOMMENDS TOTAL Official Fuel Consumption in MPG (l/100km) and CO_2 emissions (g/km) for the 208 Black Edition are: Urban 51.4 (5.5), Extra Urban 72.4 (3.9), Combined 62.8 (4.5) and CO_2 104 (g/km). MPG figures are achieved under official EU test conditions, intended as a guide for comparative purposes only and may not reflect actual on-the-road driving conditions. Terms and conditions apply, participating dealers only or visit peugeot .co.uk **Motorline (Canterbury) Ltd is acting as a credit broker and is not a lender.** We will introduce you to a limited number of lenders. #Passport Personal Lease: A guarantee may be required. Over 18's only. Finance is subject to status. Finance provided by and written quotations available from PSA Finance UK Ltd, Quadrant House, Princess Way, Redhill, RH1 1QA. PEUGEOT 208 Black Edition 3dr 1.2l, £3,350 initial rental contribution, customer initial rental £199, 48 monthly rentals payable, optional final rental £3,824, annual mileage 6000. This is a finance lease, you will not own the car at the end of the contract. Excess mileage charges may apply. All offers available on qualifying vehicles ordered and registered between 01/06/17 and 31/06/17 or until such time as they may be withdrawn by PEUGEOT at its complete discretion. The information and images here are based on the current technical data when published. The equipment shown is factory fitted or available as an option at extra cost, depending on the model. As part of a policy of continuous specification improvement, PEUGEOT reserve the right to modify the technical equipment, options and colours at any time. Calls may be recorded for training purposes. Calls charged at local rate. Information correct at time of going to press. Visit peugeot.co.uk for full product details.

THE PEUGEOT 3008 IS A POPULAR CHOICE ON THE MOTABILITY SCHEME.

WITH MORE THAN 4,000 models from major manufacturers to choose from on the Motability Scheme there is something to suit all tastes and needs.

and scooters.

Cars are supplied through a national network of some 4,500 Motability dealer partners. There is also a network of accredited suppliers of powered wheelchairs and scooters.

Adaptations to cars

For most Motability Scheme customers, a standard car or automatic is suitable for their needs, but around 10% need adaptations to enable them to drive safely, or travel in comfort as a passenger. As part of the lease, a range of popular adaptations are available at no additional cost, such as push-pull hand controls and left-foot accelerators.

Providing additional financial help

Motability may also be able to provide charitable grants to disabled people who would not otherwise be able to afford the car, adaptations or wheelchair accessible vehicle they need to obtain the mobility solution they need.

Motability is an independent charity which sets the strategic policies and direction of the Motability Scheme to ensure that it meets the needs of disabled people. The scheme is operated for Motability by Motability Operations, which is owned by the major banks – Barclays, Lloyds, HSBC and the Royal Bank of Scotland. These banks have provided consistent support since Motability's inception.

For more information about the Motability Scheme phone 0300 456 4566 or visit www.motability.co.uk

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Motability
The leading car scheme for disabled people

Micra Range: URBAN 42.2-53.3mpg (6.7-5.3L/100km); EXTRA URBAN 61.4-76.3mpg (4.6-3.7L/100km); COMBINED 52.3-65.7mpg (5.4-4.3L/100km); CO_2 emissions 125-99g/km.
Note Range: URBAN 45.6-67.3mpg (6.2-4.2L/100km); EXTRA URBAN 62.8-88.3mpg (4.5-3.2L/100km); COMBINED 55.4-78.5mpg (5.1-3.6L/100km); CO_2 emissions 119-93g/km.

Advance Payment prices are available to applications made during the current pricing period 10/04/2017 - 02/07/2017 at participating Dealers only. Models subject to availability. Written details available on request. TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE MOTABILITY SCHEME, YOU MUST BE IN RECEIPT OF THE HIGHER RATE MOTABILITY COMPONENT OF DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE, THE ENHANCED RATE MOBILITY COMPONENT OF THE PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT, THE WAR PENSIONERS' MOTABILITY SUPPLEMENT OR THE ARMED FORCES INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT. The facilities offered are for the hire (bailment) of goods. This offer is eligible for Customers only and is not available in conjunction with any other Nissan offer or scheme. This is a trademark of Motability, registered charity 299745. Models shown are for illustration purposes only. MPG figures are obtained from laboratory testing, in accordance with 2004/3/EC directives and intended for comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect real driving results. (Optional equipment, maintenance, driving behaviour, road and weather conditions may affect the official results.) Nissan Motor (GB) Ltd, The Rivers Office Park, Denham Way, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire WD3 9YS.

Adapted car means your family can travel together

The Motability Scheme has put millions of disabled people on the road to independence with peace-of-mind transport solutions even if they are not able to or old enough to drive themselves. Here we look at two examples of how it changes people's lives for the better.

MEET 12-year-old Elisabeth and her mum Sam. Elisabeth has spina bifida and hydrocephalus – conditions that affect her nervous system and mobility.

It means she cannot walk or stand independently and uses a wheelchair full time.

Sam explained: "We knew that Elisabeth was going to be born disabled but nothing prepared us for the impact it would have on family life.

"As she got older, we struggled to lift her into the car, and there wasn't enough space for the wheelchair and the whole family to travel together. What we needed was a car with ramped access so that Elisabeth could travel in her wheelchair, but that was also big enough for the whole family.

"After we got the car, we went on our first family camping trip. We managed to pack up the tent, Elisabeth's wheelchair and buggy, six people and all of the camping gear for the weekend and spent some quality time together – something we couldn't have done without the new car."

HAVING a Motability vehicle means Elisabeth and the whole family can travel together and spend quality time together. Picture: MOTABILITY

Motability
The leading car scheme for disabled people

AARON says having a Motability car has made him independent and lifted a huge pressure off his family. Picture: MOTABILITY

Motor sports fan Aaron can still travel to races

AARON, 26, is paralysed from the waist down following a motocross accident at the age of 15.

"I've always been a massive fan of motor sports and would love to become a racing driver," says Aaron. "After the accident, there was no way I was going to give up on my dream."

After passing his driving test first time, Aaron decided to exchange his government-funded mobility allowance for a brand new car through the Motability Scheme. He has an automatic with hand controls, instead of foot pedals, so it is suitable for him to drive.

"My Motability car is very important in allowing me to travel to my races and trackdays. I have recently got a handcycle and this is something that I am really enjoying, despite the short amount of time I have owned it."

A Motability car has made a huge difference to his life.

"My Motability vehicle has helped me so much. It has enabled me to live at university independently, travelling home when I need to, and also aiding with shopping trips when on campus.

"It has enabled me to travel safely, quickly and practically to work in my short career this far. Finally, it has enabled me to pursue my hobbies. I have been able to travel to my races, as and when needed. Having my Motability vehicle has lifted a huge pressure off of my family as they do not need to worry about how I am going to travel to where I need to go."

Your guide to Motability is compiled by Motoring editor Andy Russell.

ROBINS & DAY MAIDSTONE
Mill Street, MAIDSTONE, ME15 6YD
01622 753333 maidstone.peugeot.co.uk

Official Fuel Consumption in MPG (l/100km) and CO_2 emissions (g/km) for the new 2008 SUV Range are: Urban 47.1 – 65.7 (6.0 – 4.3), Extra Urban 65.7 – 85.6 (4.3 – 3.3), Combined 57.6 – 76.3 (4.9 – 3.7) and CO_2 114 – 96 (g/km). MPG figures are achieved under official EU test conditions, intended as a guide for comparative purposes only and may not reflect actual on-the-road driving conditions. †Subject to availability and on selected models only. *Grip Control® feature is engine specific. Model shown is new 2008 SUV Allure PureTech 110 at £399 Advance Payment. ^Rear parking aid is optional on Active level and standard on Allure & GT Line. Available to those in receipt of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA), the Enhanced Rate Mobility Component of the Personal Independence Payment (PIP), War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement (WPMS) or Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP). Offer available on cars ordered between 01/06/17 and 30/06/17. Information and offers correct at time of going to press. For full terms and conditions, please contact PEUGEOT Motability on Freephone 0800 877 8201. Calls may be recorded for training and quality purposes. Call charges to the number shown from landline or mobile networks may vary. For information please contact your network provider. PEUGEOT Motor Company PLC reserve the right to change or amend the offer at any time. Please visit peugeot.co.uk/motability for details of our latest offers.

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ARCHANT

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Richard John Wanstall, Geoffrey Wanstall, Douglas John Wanstall trading as J Wanstall and Sons of Bank Farm, Aldington, Ashford, Kent TN25 7DF is applying for a licence to use Bank Farm, Aldington, Ashford, Kent TN25 7DF as an operating centre for 1 goods vehicles and 2 trailers.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

LICENSING ACT 2003
Application for Premises Licence

An application has been made by: Victoria Hazell of The Event Umbrella, Waterford House, Joy Lane, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4LS for the premises Mote Park, Mote Avenue, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 7SU

On the date of: 31/05/2017

Summary of the proposed licensable activities and the proposed hours of opening:

Premises Licence for an annual event. This event will run for three days Friday to Sunday. For the following forms of regulated entertainment and the Sale of Alcohol.

Hours Open to the Public 10:00 – 22:30 Friday, Saturday & Sunday.

Hours for regulated entertainment 10:00 – 22:00 Friday, Saturday & Sunday

Sale of Alcohol, Performance of Dance, Plays, Films, Recorded Music, Live Music. Anything similar to the above

These are the maximum hours only

Any person wishing to view details of an application may contact the Licensing Partnership on 01732 227004

Any person wishing to make representation about the application should make them in writing on or before the: **28/06/2017**

Licensing Partnership, PO BOX 182, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1GP

licensing@sevenoaks.gov.uk

http://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-licensing

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. The maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary of conviction for the offence is £5000.

In loving memory of our dearly beloved brother

Michael Jeffrey Johnson

of Hampton Crescent, Gravesend, Kent. Born 12th June 1959 sadly taken from us on Monday 29th May 2017 aged 57. We will miss him terribly he shall remain in his hearts forever. He was funny, loving, generous, loved animals, nature, fishing and singing.
Everything about him will always be in our memories.

A brother's love will always be
Within our hearts each one can see
His love of life will always show
It's hard to let our brother go
Within the heavens up above

There's room up there for more to love
The Angels sing and dance with grace
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God bless and keep you safe from harm
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Love from your siblings Linda, Coral, Billy and Victor, your brother in law Gideon and nephew Darren

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Hard work key to strong Kent start

Sam Northeast's side still unbeaten in county championship

Cricket

By Mark Pennell
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

KENT captain Sam Northeast says that hard work and players carrying out their individual 'processes' well have been the keys to his side's County Championship success this season.

Unbeaten after five starts in the long-form format, Kent maintained their place in the automatic promotion berths with an emphatic 147-run win over Sussex this week.

Delighted by his unbeaten side's fourth win of the campaign, Northeast said: "There's not many times you go to Tunbridge Wells and get a positive result, you have to put in some seriously hard work if you're to achieve that, and the guys did. It was a fantastic performance.

"Joe Denly played two outstanding knocks [119 and 71*] against a very good attack then we had Darren Stevens first-innings display with the ball [5-40].

"[Darren Stevens] put in some hard yards there and came up with a magnificent spell. It was all about hard graft, the whole team, but we managed to get over the win line. There's a belief in our four-day side this season. We know the processes and we keep going through them.

"We're hopeful of getting another overseas bowler in at some stage soon to bolster the attack and we'll also look to monitor the pitches as we go deeper into the season and adapt our side to those pitches."

Deserving of their week off from the latest round of games, Kent will recharge the batteries and go again next Friday, when they welcome basement side Durham to The Spitfire Ground, St Lawrence.

PLEASED: Kent captain Sam Northeast in action Pictures: ADY KERRY

"Durham are a Division One side, on merit they would have stayed up last year, so we'll have to be on our A Game again to get anything out of the match," said Northeast. "But, we are playing some good cricket and we'll be going into it full of confidence.

"It looks really tight at the top of the table at the moment and we'll have to keep playing good cricket to keep winning, because we want to go up this year.

"We've played Sussex twice now and have beaten them twice, but they will trouble a lot of sides going forward."

Five year deal for Ebbsfleet boss McMahon

Football

EBBSFLEET United boss Daryl McMahon has signed a huge five-year contract with the club after securing promotion to the top-tier of non-league football.

The Fleet were triumphant in their play-off final against Chelmsford City last month to banish the demons of 12 months ago and clinch a place in the National League next season.

Club bosses subsequently told us they were looking to make the leap into the Football League within the next five or six years, and have clearly put their faith in McMahon to deliver precisely that.

Chairman Dr Abdulla Al Humaidi told the club's website: "Daryl has done a brilliant job at this club.

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"The quality of the football played has been outstanding and despite the disappointment of losing the 2016 promotion final on penalties in his first full season, Daryl galvanised the squad and got his just rewards this season with promotion to the National League.

"He is dedicated and committed to this club and conducts himself so professionally at all times and is a great ambassador for the club.

"I want him to know how much we appreciate what he does and I want him to feel secure in his role; offering him this long-term contract demonstrates our confidence in his ability to continue the progress made in the last two years."

McMahon added: "I love this club and feel totally comfortable with the support structure around me and our supporters can rest assured that I will be doing everything I can to move this club forward."

Sport Shorts

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Teenage star Luke back on track after injury

TEENAGE sensation Luke Hopkins was back on track last weekend just a month after breaking his collarbone at Assen.

The 15-year-old from Sittingbourne competed in the World Supersport 300 Championship and was passed fit to enjoy the British round at Derby's Donington Park in the championship, setting his fastest lap of the weekend at 1:48.325, finishing 25th.

Wingham racer Carl Mitchell had deputised in his absence last month.

Speaking afterwards, Luke said: "I didn't get the best start off the line, but kept calm and quickly began to gain places.

"[Turkish rider Asrin] Pak and I were then involved in a long battle which was great fun.

"He got away at one stage but I managed to get back to him. I had the pace at the end of the race to re-take him but I ran out of laps.

"Bearing in mind I haven't ridden for a few weeks and my shoulder aches I am very happy with the result."

IN ACTION: Luke Hopkins. Photo: CRAIG HOBBS PHOTOGRAPHY

BOSS: Dover manager Chris Kinnear

Young Chester striker latest to join Athletic

DOVER Athletic's busy summer has continued with more signings this week.

Chester FC striker Kane Richards became the club's fourth addition after arriving on a one-year deal.

Richards, 22, who can also play out wide, came through the ranks at his home-town club Derby County and signed a one-year professional deal before he was released in January 2013.

He scored eight times for the Blues last season, making a total of 39 National League appearances.

Richards is joined at Crabble by Mitch Brundle who also joined from Gateshead over the bank holiday weekend.

It followed the additions earlier in the summer of goalkeeper Mitch Walker and forward Jamie Allen.

Coyle makes first Wings signing

JAMIE Coyle has made his first signing as Welling United boss with the addition of former Crystal Palace prospect Connor Dymond.

The 22-year-old defensive midfielder came through the ranks with the Eagles but last plied his trade with local rivals Bromley FC in the National League, where he made more than 30 appearances for the Ravens last season, as they defied expectations to finish in an impressive 10th place.

Speaking to the club's official website this week, Coyle said: "I am delighted to have signed Connor on a one year deal.

"He impressed me greatly when I saw him play last season and at such a tender age he already has quality and good experience at a higher level.

"I am looking forward to working with him."

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